

## Wassup Rockers

Director Larry Clark

2006/Comedy/Drama/111min/USA

First Look Pictures

Larry Clark's new film, *Wassup Rockers*, follows a day in the life of six Hispanic teenagers from South Central Los Angeles who dare to be different. They dress like The Ramones and play hardcore music in the middle of Gangland, U.S.A. Regardless of the ridicule and stares they encounter from the hip-hop generation, they travel on their skateboards looking for adventure and a voice. They drink, talk about sex, and play music.

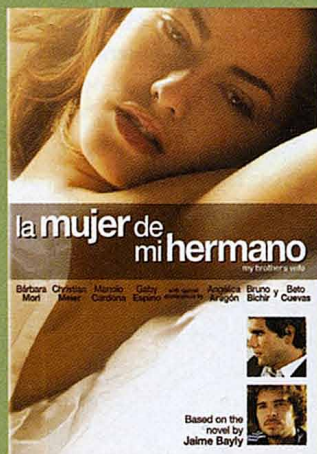
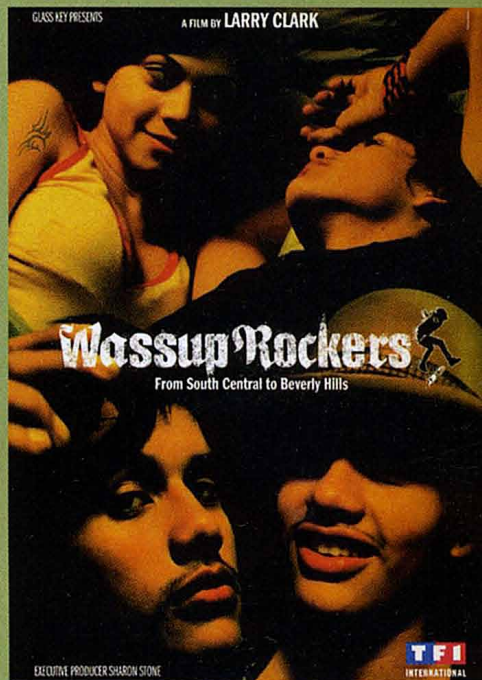
They decide to escape their haven and look for adventure in the "real world" of Beverly Hills, where they encounter true racism. Looked upon as outsiders and sex objects by the rich kids, as criminals by paranoid gun-toting adults, and as pats by the Hollywood sect, the kids never quite fit in. Their odyssey quickly escalates into tragedy and their lives change forever. Yeah, we've seen it from Clark before, many times.

I wanted to dismiss this movie as just plain bad and redundant, but I couldn't. One reason was that Clark definitely knows how to make a movie look cool. He captures

reality with the eye of someone who has his ear to the street. His unforced camera shots and knack for capturing casual hipness keeps you watching no matter how bad you think the story line is.

In fairness to Clark, he has always been more of a social commentator than a filmmaker, which is why his choice to let the children tell the story is a brave but intelligent one that most people won't understand. From the very first scene, of a shirtless young man telling a monotonous story about his life, Clark signals that this film is driven by the simplicity and depth that can only come from a tale told by a teenager. He plays on the innocence and absurdity of these young men to bring out an underlying truth best revealed by those who feel more than think. *Rockers'* is a difficult movie to watch in the same way that it is hard to have an intelligent conversation with your 12-year-old cousin. But with a little patience, it can actually be a rewarding experience.

A movie like *Rockers'* will certainly do wonders to bring a new status of cool to young Latin Americans, but more important, it should open up conversation about the still stifled voices of our youth.



## La Mujer de Mi Hermano

Words David Tianga

Director Ricardo de Montreuil

2005/Drama/89min/Colombia

At the surface, *La Mujer De Mi Hermano* seems like an over-dramatized cliché novela of a movie, but what lies underneath is a thought-provoking and relevant piece that should leave viewers with more questions than answers. *Mujer* tackles the topics of modern marriages of convenience, the Church, Latin family values, and sexuality with an indifference that sneaks up on you with powerful intent. The conflict lies within the very beautiful but very unsatisfied Zoe. Her passionless existence with her well-to-do,

good-natured, and docile husband Ignacio gets rejuvenated when she begins to spend more time with her bohemian brother-in-law Gonzalo. Gonzalo has a deep and multi-layered hatred for his older brother that keeps getting peeled off and revealed to the audience with every betrayal he unabashedly perpetrates. These characters seem to have it all — good looks, money, and bright futures. But their dark secrets and carnal desires threaten to destroy the sandcastles they have taken years to build. The fluid and honest look into modern romance and convenience moves like an arrow straight into an uncomfortable resolution. Whether it's a realistic one or not is for the viewer to decide.