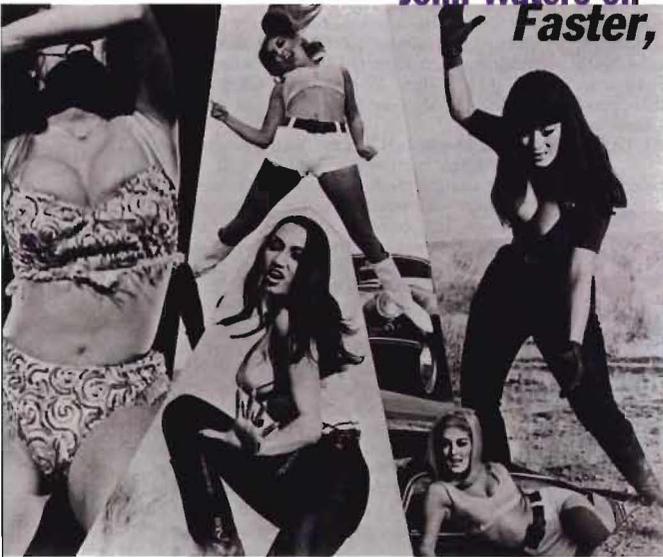


John Waters on *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*



The sweetest kittens have the sharpest claws,” read one of the ads for director **Russ Meyer’s** low-budget *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (At Film Forum January 13–26.) John Waters, the director of *Pink Flamingos* and *Hairspray*, once wrote that the 1965 film was, “beyond a doubt, the best movie ever made...possibly better than any film that will be made in the future.” And time hasn’t dulled Waters’s enthusiasm. He’s more than happy to take time out of his busy schedule to discuss its many virtues. “You can tell a Russ Meyer movie right away,” he says. “The fast cutting, way before MTV; big breasts; nasty dialogue; and women in control!” Waters first saw the movie at a drive-in

in his hometown of Baltimore and was hooked. “I went back every night and took different people,” he says. “Divine and I saw it many, many times. It was certainly an influence—and Russ would probably be surprised to hear this—on the Divine character.” A drive-in seems like the perfect place to experience *Pussycat* in all its glory, but Waters disagrees. “No, I think it would be great to see in Buckingham Palace, really. I think it *deserves* more than the drive-in. To get its proper place in critical history, it has to be shown in New York.” But what *is* its proper place? As a sexploitation classic? As camp? “It’s as a *great action movie*, with the kind of movie stars we’re hard-pressed to find anymore. Who are exploitation stars anymore? There aren’t any, because Hollywood makes exploitation movies now and they aren’t as much fun. The golden age of trash has been over for many years.” So is classic dialogue. “One of my favorite lines,” he says, “is when Tura Satana pulls into a gas station and the gas station attendant is looking down her blouse, and she says, ‘You won’t find it down there, Columbus!’” So it’s not to be dismissed as a glorious bit of soft-core naughtiness? “Well, Russ did *not* want to ever do hard-core. He came as close as you could get to it and never did, which I think was wise. Although God knows he could make a good one.”

MICHAEL GILTZ