

The Demise of Creativity

Written by Smoke Signals
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The Demise of Creativity SMOKE SIGNALS MAGAZINE - July - August 2013

We had the opportunity recently to go back through our collection of old smoking videos, and were struck by something we hadn't thought about before.

Many of the videos produced in the 1990s and early 2000s actually had plots or themes. Sure, the video quality wasn't as stellar as the HD video we see today; for the most part, it wasn't even digital. But there was a lot more thought put into the productions than is common today. Standouts were many of the videos from CoherentLight and SmokeVision (which even tried to distinguish their productions as "shows" instead of "videos," but even many of the vids from companies like Second Hand Smoke and Up In Smoke obviously were produced with a lot of forethought and planning.

Knowing most of the people behind those productions, we can certainly give credit to people like Steve Kelly and Ed Luisser for their work. But as we thought more about the differences between filming now and filming 15 years ago, another reason for the stark difference became apparent.

The producers who were shooting back then, had more resources at their disposal. Or, to put it more simply, they knew they could turn a nice profit on their work, even if it was more expensive to shoot. Costumes, sets, or simply the extra time it took to film and then post-produce the videos were an acceptable expense. Steve, Ed, or the others who put extra care and work into their productions knew that they could turn out top-quality work while staying profitable.

Things are certainly different today. Video producers who are still in business are doing so on incredibly slim margins. The audience for smoking video is larger than ever, but the amount spent on it is smaller than ever, due to (you knew we were headed here, didn't you?) the proliferation of video sharing sites and tubes where people simply upload clips or entire movies they've obtained elsewhere. And without sufficient money coming in, producers can't take the time or spend the money to create thoughtful or elaborate smoking videos anymore. It's become largely a "point and shoot" business. To put it simply, producers have no other option.

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Regular readers know that we've been predicting the demise of the smoking video industry for some time now, and we see no reason to change that prediction. In fact, many producers are teetering on the brink even as we write this. But the way the smoking fetish community obtains and consumes video in the 2010s has had this sad, interim effect - the demise of creativity.

Enjoy the July-August issue!