

## Short Takes

Friday, July 13, 2007, 4:00 AM

### **DRAMA/MEX** **2 1/2 stars**

*Several sad lives intertwine in a tattered corner of Acapulco. At IFC Center (1:33). NR: Language, nudity, sex, violence. In Spanish with subtitles.*

Visually arresting but thematically uneven, Gerardo Naranjo's fictional snapshot of a gritty Mexican beach is simply too desperate to shock us.

The first of its interconnected stories begins with a sexually violent argument between a confused young woman and her sleazy ex-boyfriend.

The second tracks the impending suicide of a middle-aged man who may be sleeping with his daughter. And the third finds a naive teenage runaway being inducted into a life of theft and prostitution.

There are some powerful scenes, thanks in large part to the striking cinematography and carefully composed shots. But the most memorable moments are always the quietest ones, in which we get a respite from so much calculated decay. - *Elizabeth Weitzman*

### **MY BEST FRIEND** **2 1/2 stars**

*Comedy about an antisocial antiques dealer who has 10 days to produce a friend or lose a high-stakes bet. At Lincoln Center, IFC Center (1:35). PG-13: Language. In French with subtitles.*

Patrice Leconte directed this mildly entertaining trifle starring Daniel Auteuil as an antisocial Paris antiques dealer who hires a very social taxi driver to teach him the art of friendliness. Auteuil's Francois has just 10 days to prove he has a best friend or lose a very expensive Greek vase to his partner.

There's no doubt that once Francois and the cabbie, Bruno (Dany Boon), have been separately introduced they will become genuine friends and improve each other's lives.

But the film has other elements of suspense - for instance, will that vase make it all the way through the movie in one piece? - that keep it interesting. - *Jack Mathews*

### **TEKKON KINKREET** **3 stars**

*Anime fantasy about two homeless kids who defend their neighborhood from violent intruders. At the Quad (1:40). R: Violent and disturbing images, brief sexuality. In Japanese with subtitles.*

As intriguing and unusual as its title, this anime debut from CGI mastermind Michael Arias bursts with enough ideas for three movies.

"Tekkon kinkreet" refers to the Japanese words for concrete, iron and muscle, but there's a steadily beating heart at the center of this meticulously built structure.

The heroes are Black and White, two street kids living in a seedy neighborhood called Treasure Town. When yakuza gangsters and alien assassins invade the area, Black is determined to defend their turf, at almost any cost.

The dazzlingly intricate backgrounds are a marvel, and though the jam-packed story occasionally trips over its own sentimentality, it quickly rights itself every time. - *Elizabeth Weitzman*

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