

## The Mexican less than smokin'

JENNIEFER BOYCE  
Staff Writer

It's about time. We've been wondering for ages when it was going to happen. She's been seen with Hugh Grant, Richard Gere and nearly every other pretty boy in Hollywood. He's been on screen with Geena Davis, Susan Sarandon and many other Hollywood Venuses. And now, finally, it has arrived—Julia Roberts and Brad Pitt are starring in a motion picture together. What should audiences expect?

Roberts and Pitt star in the new movie *The Mexican*,

which hit theaters last Friday. This movie is rated R and is directed by Gore Verbinski.

A young man named Jerry (Pitt) is a small-time criminal who has one last job that he must complete. His girlfriend, Samantha (Roberts), on the other hand, is ready to settle down and threatens to leave for Las Vegas if he takes the final job.

The job is to go to Mexico in search of a special antique pistol called "The Mexican." This pistol is cursed because whoever comes in contact with it usually ends up dead, either

because the gun backfires or something goes wrong.

For instance, the gun was a wedding gift to a noble man from a gunsmith. However, the marriage of the noble man and his bride never occurred as a result of the curse of the pistol.

Jerry's last assignment is to retrieve the gun. Samantha does not want him to leave because the last job that he had was supposed to be the final one before they settled down. He leaves in search of the pistol, and she leaves for Las Vegas.

Beware, this movie is a long

one. The search for the pistol is extended far beyond the length that is necessary and practical for keeping the audience's attention. The comedy is also very dry.

Sure, the audience laughed occasionally, but it would be a stretch to call this movie a hilariously funny comedy.

Perhaps the end is the best part of the entire movie.

I was highly disappointed that a talented actor and actress such as Pitt and Roberts would star in a movie with such an insignificant and low-quality plot.

Overall, *The Mexican* was not worth the \$7.25 that most theaters are currently charging.

However, if you are interested in seeing Roberts and Pitt star in the movie together and can tolerate dry comedy and a lengthy, ongoing adventure with a plot that lacks complexity then this a movie that you should definitely go see.

Hopefully, the next attempt of Roberts and Pitt, should they decide to co-star in a movie again, will not be such a disappointment.

## See, believe at NC Museum of Art's latest exhibition--and it's free

LAURA WELGOS  
Guest Writer

It has been said that the best things in life are free, and the Museum of Art on Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh exemplifies this adage. There is no admission charge for the museum's current exhibition, which runs through Apr. 1, 2001. The exhibit—entitled *Is Seeing Believing? The Real, The Surreal, The Unreal in Contemporary Photography*—presents works by twelve contemporary photographers.

Before you walk through the exhibit of 30 large-format photographs, prepare to embark on a journey of visual and mental intrigue. If you expect to see the natural beauty found in Ansel Adams' wilderness landscapes or the stark realism of Dorothy Lange's Depression portraits, then you may be surprised.

These photographs have been crafted using costuming, props, set design and sculpture to create abstract visual images. Allow yourself time to spend with each photograph, deciphering what is real and what has been manipulated.

At the entrance of the exhibit hall, there is a comfortable viewing room where you can sit and watch tapes of the photographers at work. The film of William Wegman working with his canine models is worth the

40 minutes it takes to see it. The portraits of Wegman's Weimaraners, which have graced postcards, calendars and the cover of the *New Yorker*, are perhaps the most familiar photographs in the exhibit.

Another tape shows the tedious and precise creative process that Sandy Skoglund uses to make her photographs.

Skoglund's sets are laboriously arranged to create detailed scenes that look like lucid dreamscapes. In *Fox Games*, blood-red sculptures of foxes in various action poses are scattered throughout a monochromatic gray dining room scene. In this photograph, the fleshy tone of human faces is the only element that evokes an image of reality.

Each artist

uses a unique method to create his or her images. Laurie Simmons fabricates costumes for her human subjects out of inanimate objects, and uses them to create fictional characters seen in her photographs *Walking House* and *Walking Camera 1 (Jimmy the Camera)*.

Patrick Nagatani uses docu-

mentary-style photography to reinvent history and make a cultural statement. And James Snitzer illuminates environmental and social concerns by combining text with fabricated landscapes.

In their collaborative works, Valeriy Gerlovina and Rimma Gerlovina use portraiture, words and abstract symbols to give their artwork a mythological feel. My favorite print by these photographers is a profile of a woman's pale face set against a black background. A hand and an arm, which seem unconnected to her, or to each other, are suspended in the darkness. Her face is framed by a hammock of hair,

which has a flame burning at the tip.

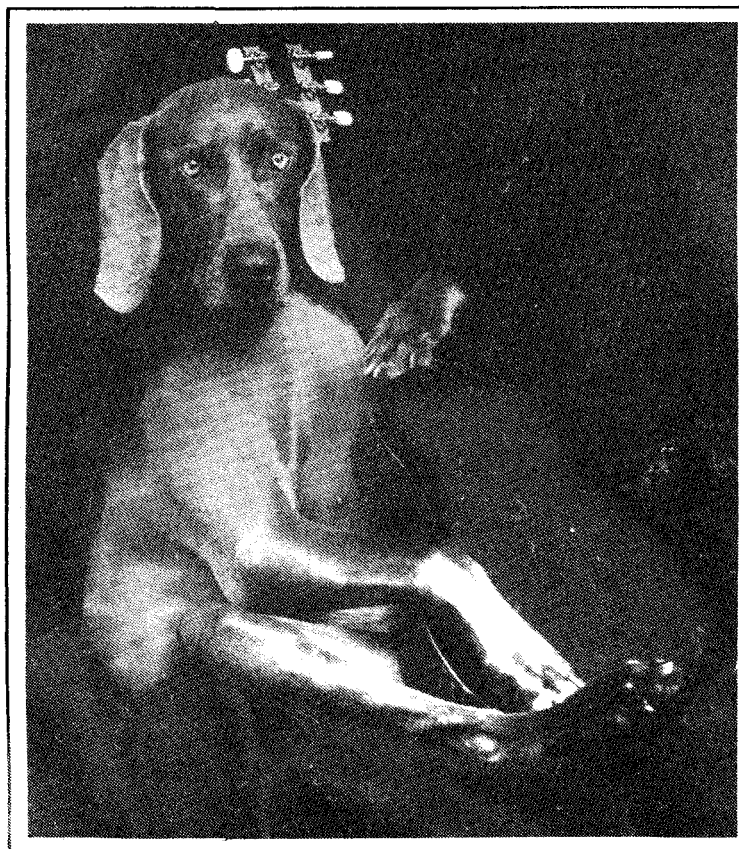
Many of the photographers capture their own image in their works.

In her series of self-portraits, Cindy Sherman borrows identities from the subjects of the old masters' paintings. The elaborately designed costumes and sets lead one to believe that these pictures are traditional oil portraits. But on closer examination, you see that the hands of the model are real and that the picture is a photograph rather than a painting.

Janieta Eyre also uses self-portraits in her photographs. Through double exposure, she creates twin sisters whose identities seem similar at first, until the intricate and unusual details in the pictures draw your attention to the differences.

The self-portraits that are the most unusual, but perhaps the most realistic, are Chuck Close's holograms. The set of holographic images show the photographer's head, in various positions, suspended in space inside of four consecutive boxes.

I left this exhibition pondering my perceptions of reality. The photographers have successfully used their craft to create a perspective of photographic art work that reveals more layers than the eyes can see.



William Wegman's *Segovia* is just one of the pieces on display at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

PHOTO COURTESY NC MUSEUM OF ART