

Section E

The Arts

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ANGEL AGES BEAUTIFULLY

Cheryl Ladd of "Charlie's Angels" will portray a grandmother in Hallmark Channel's "Though None Go with Me." 2E



Starlets can't hide the naked truth

Some bare it all to make up for inability to act

BY CRAIG D. LINDSEY
Raleigh News & Observer

RALEIGH, N.C. — When is a good time for an actress to appear butt-bald-nekkid, either on the big screen or in some other visual medium?

For some, it depends on whom they're working with. Take *Vanity Fair's* annual Hollywood issue. On the gatefold cover, young starlets Keira Knightley and Scarlett Johansson appear with Tom Ford, wearing nothing but makeup. Pale, pouty and strategically covering their naughtiest bits, the actresses were photographed by famed shutterbug Annie Leibovitz, which automatically declares the shot an artful image that's more beautiful than gratuitous.

For other actresses, try never. Rachel McAdams, the rising young actress who has appeared in "The Notebook," "Wedding Crashers" and "Red Eye," was supposed to be the third starlet in the Leibovitz photo. But when she got to



Johansson posed nude for *Vanity Fair*.

the shoot, she backed out.

The issue of actresses and nudity always raises questions. Do most actresses appear nude because they're uninhibited and don't mind shedding their clothing when the time comes, or because they know their good looks are all they have going for them? (You ever notice how every time Pamela Anderson's popularity begins to wane, she does another Playboy layout?) Can an actress appear nude and still be taken seriously as an actress? Or how about this: After an actress seriously proves herself to be one, can she go ahead and show her breasts?

While cover girls Knightley (who already has appeared nude in three films) and Johansson (sorry guys, not yet) are the nubile, celluloid darlings of the moment, they have a long way to go to prove that their body of work is as awe-inspiring as their bodies.



Carlos Castro (left) talks with John D. Montoya (right) about going to college during a coffee shop scene.



John D. Montoya (left), Anthony Flores, Anthony Alfaro and Rita Ann Banda (right) in a scene from the movie.



Rita Ann Banda (from left), Anthony Flores and Sarah Martinez talk about the birds and the bees with Anthony Alfaro.

VIDEO

Go to caller.com to see movie trailers for 'Tortillas Again?' and 'For Amor.'

A serving of 'Tortillas Again?'

Movie's plot is a rich lesson about what's important

BY CASSANDRA HINOJOSA
Caller-Times

Years of making music videos for his San Antonio-based Tejano record label has paid off for Paul Ramirez, a former San Diego resident.

On Tuesday, his feature film debut "Tortillas Again?" will be released through Maverick Entertainment Group and will be available on DVD and VHS at Blockbuster, Hollywood Video, Wal-Mart, Circuit City and Best Buy.

Through his comedy "Tortillas Again?," Ramirez hopes to share Latinos' rich heritage and focus on everyday issues. The slice of life film targets families and is void of profanity and sex scenes.

"The family in 'Tortillas Again?' is like a lot of families in real life in that they have a child that wants to go to college, but they can't afford to send him to school," said Ramirez, 45, who owns Lobo Video Productions in San Antonio and shot the film in early 2005.

The plot unfolds when Alejandro Dominguez, who has played the lottery for 10 years, stuffs a winning ticket in his shirt and forgets about it. The ticket takes a journey of its own and turns up in an unlikely place — in a tortilla that his son, Nicholas, is eating.

"There's a point where they thought they lost the ticket ... and he comes to see his family in a whole new light where he doesn't feel he needs the money," Ramirez explained.

Maverick releases 52 films a year of varying genres including urban, horror and Latino. Fusion Films, the secondary Latino label under Maverick, markets films that appeal to the younger Latino demographic, incorporating Latino talent, language (Spanglish) and culture.

Maverick president Doug Schwab said distribution is a "launching pad" for filmmakers to get discovered.

"Once it's on DVD ... people are going to notice Paul Ramirez's film around the country and you never know if a bigger film studio around the line will notice it," Schwab said.

The script was written by Ramirez's son, Matthew Ramirez,

22, and Matthew's friend Sergio Ramirez, 23. The pair wrote the script in high school and co-directed the film.

"I kind of consider them to be the next Matt Damon and Ben Affleck of the Latino community," Paul Ramirez said.

Matthew says working with his dad is a "good way to sneak in the back door" of the movie industry.

"It was just one of those opportunities for us to jump on the bandwagon ... and for us to write stories for (my dad)," said Matthew, a UTSA technical communications student. "He pitches us a story and we let our imaginations run wild. ... Everything in the story is from our lives that we've gone through."

In the future, Schwab hopes to distribute other films Paul Ramirez is shooting in Texas.

Ramirez wrote and produced the romantic drama "For Amor," filmed in both San Antonio and the Mexican border town of Piedras Negras. "For Amor" was directed by Matthew and Sergio and is in post-production.

Filming for the hardcore action drama "Coca," about cocaine trafficking from Monterrey, Mexico to San Antonio, starts this fall. Matthew pitched the film's idea after watching "Maria Full of Grace." Matthew and Sergio wrote most of the script.

"We don't want to be known as a company that's going to do one type of film," said Paul Ramirez. "We want to cover (all genres)."

Schwab, who hopes to see more South Texas films on the label, says "Tortillas Again?" will have distribution in foreign countries in about a year.

"After they see the fruits of his labor ... it should let talent and other people in the area know he's a real filmmaker," Schwab said. "You don't have to live in Hollywood to be a real filmmaker. You can create a little film industry (where you're at) and have distribution into the mass market."

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Former San Diego resident, Paul Ramirez, 45, directed his first feature film 'Tortillas Again?'



Ramirez's son Matthew Ramirez, 22, co-wrote the script for 'Tortillas Again?'

"The bottom line is ('Tortillas Again?') is a good story ... no matter what race and group you come from."
— Doug Schwab, president of Maverick Entertainment Group

'Self-centered' artist takes look at herself

Photos, stamps, busts displayed in home space

BY ISRAEL SAENZ
Caller-Times

You probably will want to make sure you have the right address when you pull up. And the gallery? A small room in a rented-out house.

But the art is interesting.

Mini-busts in colors ranging from hot pink to olive sit on ledges surrounding the room. Three pedestals carry larger busts of women of different temperaments. The walls are covered with stamps comprised of four faces.

They're all Amorette Garza.

The Del Mar College art instructor's new exhibit, "Self Centered," opened March 25 at Residence Independent Art Space, the home of local artists David Hill and Jorge Alegria. Garza's works are the result of introspective, as well as literal, looks at herself. The exhibit runs through April 15.

"As time goes on there are different aspects of myself I become interested in," Garza said. "The pieces are basically me working on myself."

She used a mirror and photos up to 10



Amorette Garza's 'Self-Centered' exhibit is on display through April 15.

years old to sculpt the pieces of herself. The busts, some of which Garza began a year ago, are works by other artists with her face added to them.

She molded four images of herself at different stages of life into an imprint for a stamp, which serves as "wallpaper" for the exhibit.

"It seems kind of vain," she said. "But it's not so much vanity as it is self-reflection. It's just kind of me working on myself."

Alegria said a major motivation for him and Hill to open an art space out of their home was to give grassroots talent an added spotlight.

"Other artists just show their own work," Alegria said. "There's some people who I feel needed to get some focus."

Garza said Corpus Christi should try to retain creative minds as well as intelligent ones.

"If we don't make an art community, we won't have one," she said. "And then we'll lose a lot of diversity."

For now, Garza does her part by pushing her students to show off their work. Several have entered pieces in the Del Mar College Student Art Association Student Exhibition running through April 28.

She said many often overlook the value of the artistic spark in favor of finished products. At least now she can put a face on her creative journey.

"An object that you create has its own properties, but it's the process of getting there that's the artistic part," she said. "Art is just a by-product."

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Amorette Garza's works include 'Madame Reclaimer after Chinard,' (foreground) and 'Me as Young Girl After David' (left).

SELF-CENTERED

What: Self-Centered, featuring works by Del Mar College art instructor Amorette Garza
When: Noon to 4 p.m. Saturdays and by appointment through April 15

Where: Residence Independent Art Space, 5601 Bonner Drive
Cost: Free
Information: www.r5601.com