

Themes of Granny X

While it is always easiest to peg a film with clumsy genre descriptions, “Granny X” could be called a Burlesque Memento Mori. Its deeply flawed central character experiences life as a prudish struggle against the current of filth and decay running underneath her aspirations to spiritual purity. Her transcendence of that struggle falls painfully short.

“Granny X” began in reference to an idea: that simulative media tend to have a “pornographic” dimension, that they play upon our unconscious sexual response and the need for companionable gratification. I had joined a discussion several years ago, in which someone suggested that a film about “grannies” might be considered “granny porn”. I enjoyed the absurd, expansive possibilities this conjured. In short, fun. I saw an opportunity to portray our private fear of old age and death (and also myself) in a surprising, thought-provoking way.

The film is an inversion of redemption, of individuality. The “X” represents an unknown quantity: trauma, anomie, taboo, a spurious superpower. X is an anti-salvation in which it is possible for the unenlightened to touch the inner recesses of awareness.

“Granny X” is an Impossible Dream, collapsing catastrophically. It is a long story artfully crammed into a short film. Like life, it is beautiful and ugly; an ascension toward defeat. It is both lightly humorous and heavy-serious. Its musicality fights narrative conventions, insisting that there is something more out there, something numinous and strange. Finally, it evades or at least repels away from those same cheap gratifications on whose playground it was built.

It is my hope that these honest gestures prove touching and therapeutic for some, their clanging apocalypse thrilling, the themes rigorous, subtle, nondidactic. It seems that we often watch movies to watch the human spirit cathartically conquer its demons and escape the jaws of fate. “Granny X” is different: it refuses to compose itself around wishful thinking. It wants us to see objectively, to consider that our dreams may not always come to the rescue, but that we can celebrate and laugh at what remains: a wilted flower that has fallen pathetically to the floor.