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FILM



Buddy picture: *Tigrero* is appreciable mostly for its brief moments of intimacy between Jim Jarmusch (left) and Sam Fuller.

'Tigrero: A Film That Was Never Made'

Tues/28–Thurs/30,
Roxie Cinema

IT'S A FUNNY sight: Jim Jarmusch and Sam Fuller—one a sedate hepster in a Ramones shirt and a white pompadour, the other a crotchety cigar-soggying chatterbox; each polar heights from the other; each embodying cinematic genius in very different respects—disembark from a wobbly canoe and wander through an Amazonian island where they are greeted by the native Karaja Indians in full body paint, not unlike C-3PO and R2D2 encountering

the Ewoks. The film responsible for this surreal situation takes its title from an unproduced Hollywood adventure pic involving producer Daryl Zanuck and stars John Wayne and Ava Gardner, a project that went down the tubes for financial reasons but inspired enough intrigue in its director (Fuller) that he shot preliminary location footage in 16mm. Using the characteristics of an ethnograph, biographical profile, and buddy picture, director Aki Kaurismäki documents Sam Fuller's return 40 years later and just lingers to focus on whatever happens there, which, unfortunately, isn't much. Interestingly, the film retains that socially amiss brand of humor that plays off the coupling of at-odds personalities and the awkwardness of being a foreigner, so common to Jarmusch's

own films. Despite a scattered focus, an overarching theme seems to hover over the island in *Tigrero*, one hinting at some profound secret to be unearthed out of the link between Fuller's esoteric, war-scarred vision, Jarmusch's keen reckoning with American attitudes, and the tales of mainland modernization told by the Karaja. Whether such a theme exists or not is as certain as a Jarmuschian ending, which makes *Tigrero* appreciable mostly as a buddy picture with brief moments of intimacy between Jim and Sam, two of cinema's most enigmatic auteurs. For the premiere of *Tigrero*, the Roxie lines up an appetizer of four Fuller classics: Sat/25 and Sun/26, *Naked Kiss* and *Shock Corridor*; Mon/27, *Merrill's Marauders* and *Fixed Bayonets*. (Jesse Malings)