

TELEVISION

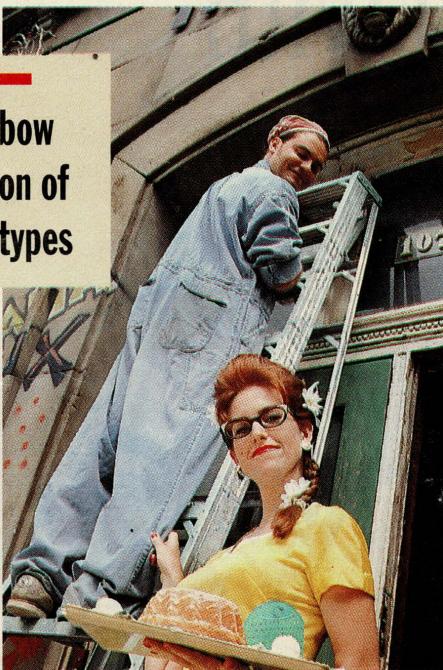
Branding Generation X

X-RATED

Directed by Kit Hood
(CBC, Feb. 27, 8 p.m.)

The quandary of Generation X, twentysomethings searching for both an identity and a future, has become North America's latest cultural cliché. In *Reality Bites*, a quirky new movie comedy, Winona Ryder plays a dazed and confused college valedictorian who has no job options, but two boyfriends to choose from: a shallow yuppie executive and a selfish bohemian poet. Now *X-Rated*, a quirky CBC-TV movie, presents a romantic comedy based on similar extremes. Tony (Gordon Michael Woolvett), a spoiled young preppie slumlord who wants to strike it rich, falls for River (Stacie Mistysyn), a backpacking blond idealist with ambitions to save the Third World. Produced by the makers of the successful CBC teen series *Degrassi High*, *X-Rated* features some strong performances, especially by the engaging Mistysyn, a *D-*

A rainbow coalition of stereotypes



Scene from *X-Rated*: cute and contrived

grassi graduate. But they are defeated by a script that is too cute, too contrived and too intent on pigeonholing its characters.

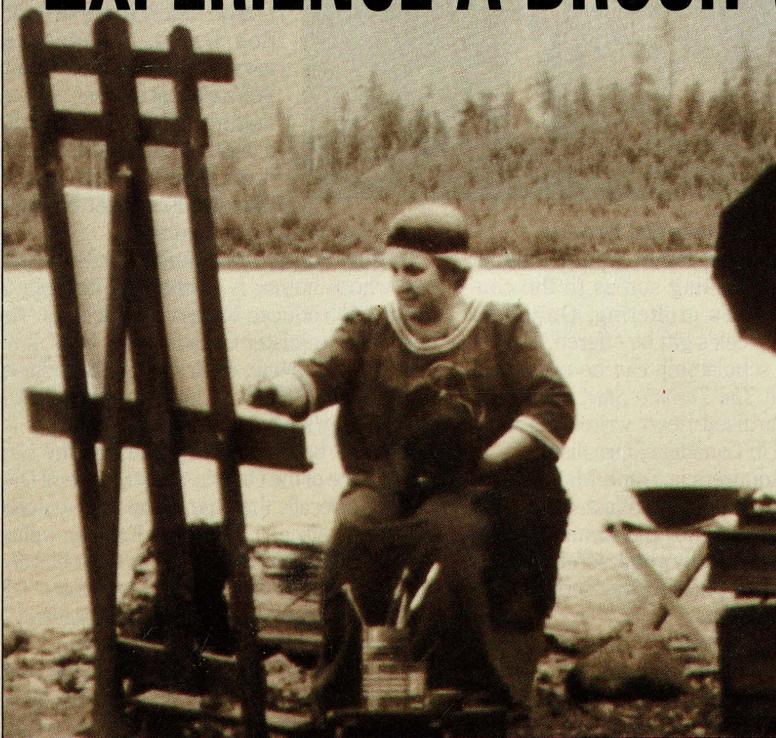
The action revolves around a dilapidated inner-city apartment building owned by Tony's parents. After the superintendent mysteriously drops dead, Tony persuades his parents to let him fix the place up and sell it. River, one of the tenants, rallies the others to help out. But she is horrified to learn that Tony is just trying to raise money for a pet project called Club Mex, a fake village on a Mexican beach for tourists who want nothing to do with the locals.

The plot boils down to a struggle over the fate of the apartment building, whose residents add up to a rainbow coalition of stereotypes, including two bike couriers—a gay Indian (Billy Merasty) and his militant-feminist roommate (Marcia Laskowski). As Tony's mother, meanwhile, Kate Lynch performs a game parody of a New Age therapist. And radio personality Reiner Schwarz is well-cast as a disc jockey stuck in the 1960s. But every character seems to have a label pasted to his or her forehead.

X-Rated's creators hope to expand their concept into a TV series. In the movie, however, their calculation seems as transparent as algebra. And in trying to portray the reality behind the myth of Generation X, *X-Rated* draws a blank.

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