



## **An Askew View: The Films of Kevin Smith**

*John Kenneth Muir*

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(Applause Books). When Clerks opened at cinemas across the country in 1994, it took everyone, especially the film industry, by surprise. Filmed on a shoestring budget after hours at a convenience store, it was crude (in technique and language), realistic and, above all, hilarious. The movie's nationwide success helped launch the independent film boom of the 1990s and catapulted its director, Kevin Smith, to full-fledged stardom. Smith's work is explored in *An Askew View*, the first ever study of his films. John Kenneth Muir examines all of Smith's movies, including *Mallrats*, *Chasing Amy*, and the hugely controversial and variously interpreted *Dogma*. Muir discusses Smith's themes and obsessions in depth: his New Jersey boosterism, the cast of characters that pop in and out of all of his films, and the references to *Star Wars* and other icons of pop culture. *An Askew View* is a fascinating and detailed history of the art of this visionary filmmaker, New Jersey's favorite local-boy-makes-good since Bruce Springsteen.

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