

STRONG LANGUAGE

UK press cuttings

Strong Language

Certificate TBA; 78 mins

A belated release is usually a bad sign, but Simon Rumley's debut feature *Strong Language*, made in 1997, is an exception. As a portrait of the lifestyle of '90s youngsters, *Human Traffic* got in first, but this film's originality prevents it from losing out.

Both style and content are dictated by the film's effective resolution, which should remain undisclosed. What can be said is that much of the footage offers a cross-section of London's twentysomethings commenting on issues affecting their lives, including club culture, Aids, reactions to one-night stands and cynicism over government attitudes. Playing like real-life interviews, these scenes are dramatised by the immediacy of the actors. Meanwhile the views expressed are recognised by the audience with amusement, approval or disgust.

These comments are linked by one man narrating his own life experiences. His story unfolds gradually to disclose a tragic and disturbing tale. Here, too, we are asked to respond, but, to keep the film in balance and our interest equally distributed, this thread is dedramatised. There are no flashbacks and the man speaks mainly in long shot and in shadow. When the substance and intensity of his story emerge late on, Rumley is ready to crown this portrait of London life by unveiling the hitherto hidden pivot of the drama. By its nature, the film tells us little of his technical skills as a cinematographer, but it proves Rumley's ability both with actors and as a master of dramatic structure. **NFT**

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