Jim Jarmusch

Stranger than Paradise 1984
• Characters’ pasts are not important--little history

• conduct motivated by the present

• characters living quiet existence

• unable to communicate
• Lethargic atmosphere interrupted by an outsider---usually from another country

• they expose shallow, emptiness of American characters
• culture collision

• exposes American “throwaway” culture

• “to make a film about America, it seems logical to have at least one perspective that’s transplanted, because ours is a collection of transplanted influences”
• (Mis)communication informs the interaction between Jarmusch’s characters

• Only link through pop culture

• familiarity
• single long lasting shots

• not much happens in the way of conventional plots

• The New World, One Year Later, Paradise
• absurd ending  Land of opportunity?

• lightweight Beckett? “patience towards huge blundering universe?”

• PA for Wim Wenders, German Director

• Made the film with leftover stock
• Five minute short--expanded to 30 minutes, then became a 110,000 feature

• Jarmusch’s goal was to make a simple, innovative, deadpan film about deadbeats

• it was important not to imitate the French New Wave, or New German Cinema, but to have a fresh aesthetic
• Made him the most hip Indie director of the 80’s

• large following in other markets, besides New York--turned a profit

• Hollywood sent him scripts--Teenage sex comedies?
• doesn’t like the over-dramatic style of Hollywood, where the actors are thought of as actors

• went on to make Down by Law--neo-noir comedy.

• comic reversal of a typical Hollywood movie-where the Americans show the European how it’s done.
The book describes Jarmusch’s later work as taking a down turn. That is critically debatable. Jonathan Rosenbaum of the Chicago Reader calls “Dead Man” one of the greatest American films of all time-

Ghost Dog, Broken Flowers, Mystery Train