



SECTION D
HERALDNEWS

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Friday

Can you spot a liar?

Herald News staffers
recount memorable fibs
they've heard.
bring it, D7

Examining the vulnerability of opportunity

By ED BEESON
Herald News

In the grimy Jersey City neighborhood where the new film "On the Outs" is set, the Statue of Liberty is often visible in the background. She stands on the horizon, shimmering in the daylight's haze.

MOVIE REVIEW

Except Lady Liberty's back is turned on Jersey City, making her a fitting, if accidental, metaphor for how the land of opportunity is inhabited by millions without any opportunity of their own.

"All around (New York) are these communities that are excluded from what it has to offer," the film's co-director Lori Silverbush

said in a telephone interview. "It has to have a diminishing effect."

The three people at the heart of "On the Outs," which opens today in New York, Bayonne and cities across the country, are young women who grow diminished by their circumstances. They make a few bad choices, and gradually the world starts to constrict around them like a snake on prey. There is no safety net.

More than anything, "On the Outs" tries to show how vulnerable young people are — women, especially — when they live on the mean streets of inner cities.

The three girls cross paths twice: once in a juvenile detention center and once on the outside, when their lives have started to spiral out of control. The first, Marisol (Pa-

Three young women diminished by their circumstances.

la Mendoza, the film's co-creator), is a 17-year-old mother whose crack habit gets her locked away and lands her daughter in the hands of social workers. Oz (Judy Marte of "Raising Victor Vargas"), who is also 17, is the film's moral center. She is a tough-as-nails crack dealer who hates addicts — probably because her mom is one — and who sticks up for her mentally challenged brother, probably because her mother never did.

Lastly, Suzette (Anny Mariano), 15, is the daughter of a hard-work-

ing single mom who shields her children from the streets. Suzette should have been the one to get away, but she falls for a drug dealer who, in turn, lands the girl in one frightening situation after another, until she finds herself being handcuffed for a second time.

Both Silverbush, 30, and co-director Michael Skolnik, 27, come from documentary backgrounds, and they use the genre's techniques to build the film's gritty authenticity. They developed the three lead characters after interviewing young women incarcerated at a Hudson County detention center.

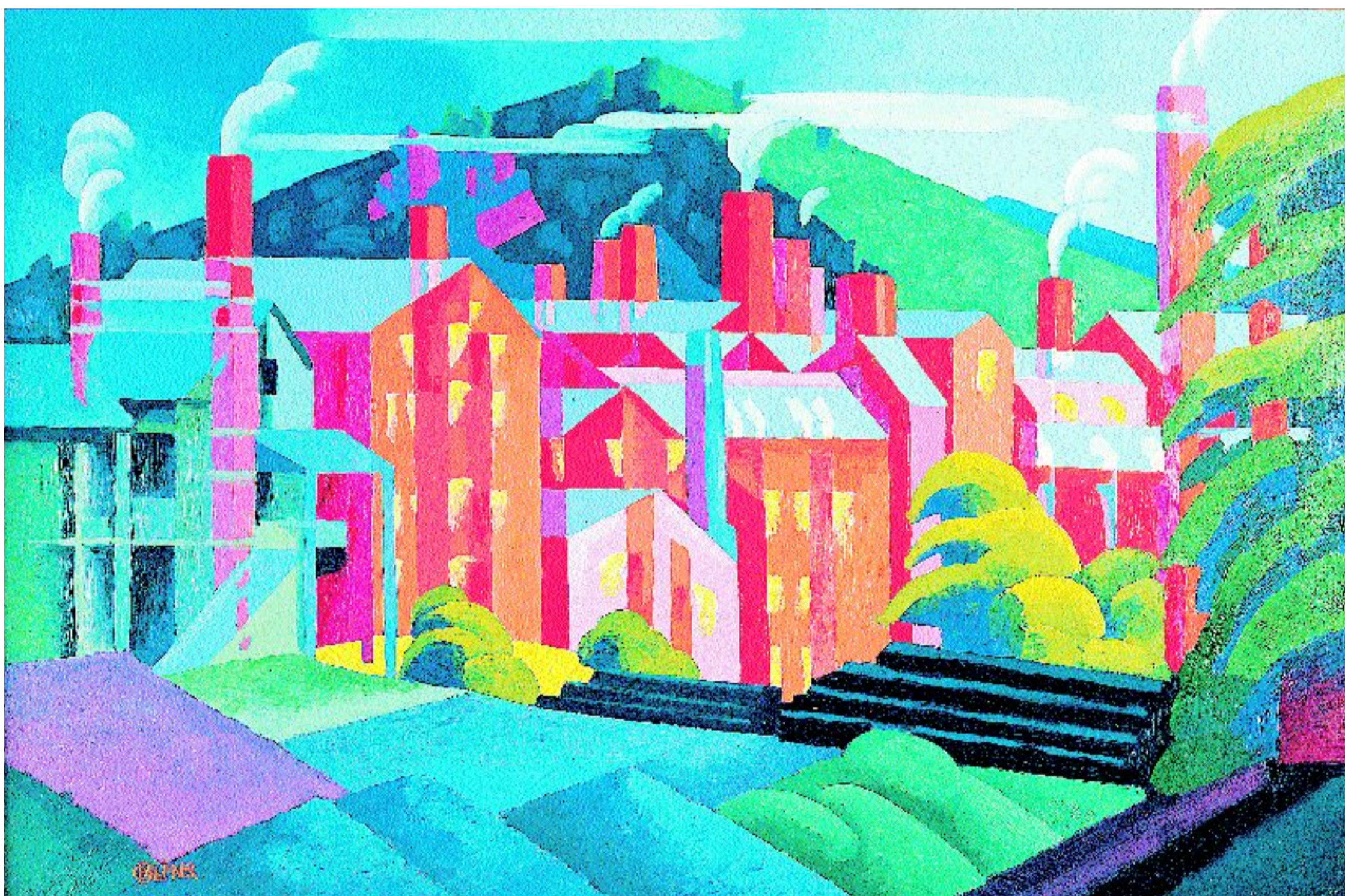
The young women there spoke about their life "on the outs," their life outside jail, and their stories al-

Please see 'ON THE OUTS', D2



Polychrome Pictures

Paola Mendoza plays Marisol, a 17-year-old mother who loses her freedom and her child as a result of an addiction to crack.



Whitney Museum of American Art

Paterson is the setting for Oscar Bluemner's "Jersey Silk Mills," which is featured in a retrospective of the artist's work through Feb. 12 at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art.

PAINTING PATERSON

New Jersey landscapes provided outlet for troubled artist Oscar Bluemner

By ED BEESON
Herald News

The painter Oscar Bluemner may have been, as one of his modern champions describes him, a miserable lout who alienated his supporters and dragged his family into wretched poverty because he pictured himself a martyr for modern art.

ART EXHIBIT

"Diplomacy was not his high mark," says Barbara Haskell, a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

But Bluemner, who painted extensively in New Jersey during the early 20th century, was one of the most important members of the

American modernist movement, even if he is one of the least remembered. According to Haskell, who organized the Whitney's current retrospective of Bluemner's work, "He is the one case where an unknown or forgotten artist really ranks with his peers." And his peers included the great modernist painters and photographers Alfred Stieglitz, Georgia O'Keeffe and Marsden Hartley.

So what makes Bluemner, a German immigrant, so important to American art? In part, it was due to Paterson.

Bluemner was chiefly a landscape painter and for most of his career he used industrial New Jersey towns like Paterson, Montville and Wharton as backdrops.

"He was attracted to places where man and nature came together," Haskell says. New Jersey at the time typified to Bluemner the coexistence of vibrant nature and thriving human industry.

But Bluemner's landscapes didn't resemble landscapes in the classic sense. The painter drew his style from a mix of German expressionism and early cubism, and this gave his work a measure of abstraction. He built his buildings from blocks of bright colors and surrounded them with gnarled trees, springy hills, rushing rivers and desolate skies.

One of the most iconic paintings of his early period is called "Expressions of a Silk Town (Pa-

Please see **BLUENNER**, D3

Looking for laughs with Albert Brooks

By CHRISTY LEMIRE
AP Movie Critic

Albert Brooks wrote, directed and stars in "Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World." Whether he found any still remains a mystery.

A self-indulgent, toothless and meandering satire, the film essentially consists of Brooks being himself on cue — that is, neurotically grouching — as he travels to India and Pakistan on a government mission.

MOVIE REVIEW

The title suggests that the movie couldn't be more relevant. And to be fair, it is a clever premise. "What makes you laugh?" Brooks asks strangers over and over as Maya (Sheetal Sheth), his

LOOKING FOR COMEDY IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

Starring: Albert Brooks, John Carroll Lynch, Sheetal Sheth, Jon Tenney

Written and directed by: Albert Brooks

Running time: 98 minutes

Rated: PG-13, for drug content and brief strong language

enthusiastic yet comically challenged assistant/translator, takes notes by his side.

But he never comes up with an answer, and it almost seems as if that was never his intention anyway, even though he's saddled with crafting a 500-page report of

his findings.

"Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World" allows Brooks to trot out some of his old stand-up routines, including his deconstruction of the traditional ventriloquist act. (It's easy to forget that, long before movies like "Lost in America" and "Broadcast News," Brooks got his start nearly 40 years ago performing on Steve Allen's and Ed Sullivan's shows and the "Tonight" show, among other variety programs.)

Here and there, he does hit the mark with some of his absurdist observations. He can even laugh at himself at the film's start by having Penny Marshall trash him for co-starring in the needless, over-the-top

Please see **COMEDY**, D2



The Associated Press/Warner Independent Pictures

Albert Brooks wrote, directed and starred in "Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World."

BEST BETS

MUSEUM MEETS SPA: Relieve stress and restore your body at the Newark Museum. On Saturday, the museum hosts a day of workshops, lectures and hands-on demonstrations called "Discover Ethnoscience: All-Day Spa for Healthy Mind and Body."

Featured activities will include alternative medicinal techniques from China, India, Japan, Africa and the Caribbean islands, such as tai chi and yoga, as well as Tibetan chant, acupuncture and African herbal healing.

Activities take place from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Newark Museum, 49 Washington St., Newark. Admission is free. For a schedule of events or to learn more, call (973) 596-6563 or go to www.newarkmuseum.org.

— Makeba Scott Hunter

More Best Bets on D3