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**Posted: Mon., Jan. 13, 2003, 9:00pm PT**

## Mudd making 'Art' at UA

### 'Confidential' pic first film to be released under pact

By [DANA HARRIS](#)

United Artists has inked a first-look deal with "Ghost World" production company Mr. Mudd, headed by Lianne Halfon, John Malkovich and Russell Smith.

Malkovich will star in the first film released under the deal, "Art School Confidential." The pic reunites UA with the "Ghost World" team of writer-helmer Terry Zwigoff, writer Daniel Clowes and Mr. Mudd.

UA will release the film domestically, with Miramax Films co-financing the picture and handling foreign distribution.

Based on Clowes' graphic novel of the same name, "Art School Confidential" takes a satirical look at the cult of celebrity in the story of a cop who goes undercover as an art student and gains critical acclaim for his work. The cop-turned-artist earns further recognition by posing as the felon-at-large and, when he realizes that critical kudos hinge upon him posing as a killer, he considers taking the rap for the crime.

"We're thrilled to be working again with Mr. Mudd," said Bingham Ray, UA prexy. "They're a really talented, creative and out-of-the-box group of people -- exactly the sort of filmmakers we enjoy working with," he added.

"With 'Ghost World' and now with 'Art School Confidential,' United Artists really demonstrates its interest in unique material and a willingness to trust our not-so-common sensibilities," said Malkovich.

Mr. Mudd launched in 1998. Since then, the shingle produced Malkovich's directorial debut, "The Dancer Upstairs," starring Javier Bardem, which will be released by Fox Searchlight on Feb. 26. Company also exec produced and self-distributed the documentary about artist Ray Johnson, "How to Draw a Bunny," which premiered at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival.

Now in post is the Mr. Mudd production "Kill the Poor," directed by Alan Taylor. An adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's latest novel, "Found in the Street," is in pre-production.

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