



## penelope spheeris

# THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Usa, 1981, 35mm, 100', col.



## THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

**regia, soggetto/  
director, story**

Penelope Spheeris

**fotografia/cinematography**

Steve Conant

**montaggio/film editing**

Charlie Mullin

**suono/sound**

Alan Cutner

**interpreti/cast**

Alice Bag Band,

Dinah Cancer,

Catholic Discipline,

Circle Jerks, Fear,

Black Flag, X,

The Germs,

Frank Gargani,

Bill Gazzarri,

Michelle Baer Ghaffari,

Jenny Lens,

Nicole Panter,

Roger Rogerson,

Rick Schmidlin

**produttori/producers**

Jeff Prettyman,

Penelope Spheeris

**produzione/production**

Spheeris Inc.

Los Angeles, 1981. Un luogo di alienazione e miseria che diviene terreno fertile per la nascita e l'affermazione del punk rock, nato qualche anni prima sulla East Coast. Una manciata di band spericolate e folli che, nel pieno di una fioritura artistica con pochi precedenti, gettano le basi per generi e sottogeneri che faranno la storia. X, The Germs, Fear, Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Alice Bag Band e Catholic Discipline sono la punta di un iceberg, un'avanguardia in rotta di collisione con il mondo, sempre in bilico tra tragedia e sarcastica noncuranza.

«Ai tempi il punk era un fenomeno nuovo a L.A. Probabilmente avevano già realizzato dei film sull'argomento in Inghilterra o a New York, ma qui no. Non disponevo di un archivio a cui attingere, ma di una compagnia di produzione, sì, e potevo usarne le attrezzature. Quindi facevo il mio lavoro, riprendendo band come gli Staples Singers, i Fleetwood Mac o i Doobie Brothers, e poi andavo la sera in un club punk e utilizzavo lo stesso materiale di ripresa».

☆☆

*Los Angeles, 1981. A place of alienation and misery which becomes fertile soil for the rise and affirmation of punk rock, which had been born a few years earlier on the East Coast. A handful of reckless and wild bands, in a flood tide of artistic flowering with few precedents, set the foundation for genres and sub-genres which would make history. X, The Germs, Fear, Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Alice Bag Band and Catholic Discipline are just the tip of the iceberg, an avant-garde on a collision course with the world, always toeing the line between tragedy and sarcastic disregard.*

*"At that time, punk was so fresh in L.A. They may have been making films in England or New York, but there was really nothing here. I didn't have a research bank I could tap into, but I had a film company, and I always had equipment checked out on the record company's account. So I would go do my job and shoot the Staples Singers or Fleetwood Mac or the Doobie Brothers, and then I would go to a punk club at night and use the same equipment there."*

**Penelope Spheeris** (New Orleans, Louisiana, Usa, 1945) ha studiato biologia presso la University of California e cinema e teatro presso la Ucla. Dopo aver lavorato in televisione, nel 1981 ha diretto il documentario sulla scena punk americana *The Decline of Western Civilization*, divenuto in breve tempo un film leggendario. Sono seguiti *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years* (1988), incentrato sulla scena glam ed heavy metal losangelina e *The Decline of Western Civilization Part III* (1998), in cui è tornata a interessarsi di punk rock. Parallelamente ha diretto i cult movie *Suburbia* (1983) e *Fusi di testa* (1992) e un buon numero di commedie, tra cui *A Beverly Hills... signori si diventa* (1993), *Piccole canaglie* (1994), *La pecora nera* (1996) ed *Effetti collaterali* (1998).

**Penelope Spheeris** (New Orleans, LA, USA, 1945) studied biology at the University of California and film and theatre at UCLA. After working in television, she directed a documentary about the American punk scene, *The Decline of Western Civilization*, in 1981, which soon became legendary. It was followed by *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years* (1988), focusing on L.A.'s glam and heavy metal scene; and *The Decline of Western Civilization Part III* (1998), in which her interest returns to punk rock. At the same time, she directed the cult movies *Suburbia* (1983) and *Wayne's World* (1992), and a good many comedies, including *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1993), *The Little Rascals* (1994), *Black Sheep* (1996) and *Senseless* (1998).

### filmografia essenziale/ essential filmography

*The Decline of Western Civilization* (doc., 1981), *Suburbia* (id., 1983), *The Boys Next Door* (I ragazzi della porta accanto, 1985), *Hollywood Vice Squad* (id., 1986), *Dudes* (*Dudes*, diciottenni arrabbiati, 1987), *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years* (doc., 1988), *Wayne's World* (*Fusi di testa*, 1992), *The Decline of Western Civilization Part III* (doc., 1998), *The Beverly Hillbillies* (*A Beverly Hills... signori si diventa*, 1993), *The Little Rascals* (*Piccole canaglie*, 1994), *Black Sheep* (*La pecora nera*, 1996), *Senseless* (*Effetti collaterali*, 1998).