



Un afamado director de cine norteamericano filmaba su última película en Yucatan y fue testigo de numerosos desastres acabando estos con la vida de un miembro del equipo en las ruinas de Xcambo. Los Mayas decidieron sacrificarlo a los dioses, mas al invocar a San Genesio de Roma, el director de cine resucito y continuo la edicion de su obra maestra.

**LA
ÚLTIMA
PELÍCULA**

A film by Raya Martin and Mark Peranson

LA ÚLTIMA PELÍCULA

A film by Raya Martin and Mark Peranson



“If this is going to be a documentary, or a lifestyle film, or whatever you wanna call it, I mean, it is going to be that kind of thing, then it should expose whatever. And that’s why at the same time it’s a destructive act, it’s also a creative act for me because a creative act is to say, hey, I’m not gonna hide in the closet anymore. I’m going to be at least a witness to myself...”

—Dennis Hopper, *The American Dreamer*

“Garbage lasts forever, but the memory is very fragile.”

—Gabino Rodriguez

FESTIVALS/SALES

Mark Peranson
Cinema Scope
info@cinema-scope.com
+1 416 889-5430

CANADIAN DISTRIBUTION

Filmswelike
Ron Mann/Michael Boyuk
mike@filmswelike.com
+1 416 971-9131

PUBLICIST

Virginia Kelly
VK and Associates
virginia@vkpr.ca
+1 416 466-9799

Running time: 88 minutes

Production countries: Canada/Denmark/
Mexico/Philippines

Year of production: 2013

Language: English and Spanish with English subtitles

Shooting formats: 16mm/Super 8mm/HD/DSLR/
Handicam/iPhone/GoPro

Projection format: 35mm/DCP/HDCam

ONE-LINE SUMMARY (preferred)

A famous American filmmaker travels to the Yucatán to scout locations for his last movie. The Mayan Apocalypse intercedes.

LONGER SYNOPSIS

A filmmaker (Alex Ross Perry), along with his local guide (Gabino Rodríguez), traverse the Yucatán in the days leading up to the “end of the world” with the idea of making his last movie. In the area where an asteroid hit the Earth 66 million years ago, taking the planet close to annihilation and eradicating the dinosaurs, they look at possible locations for the film, even journeying to Chichen Itza on December 21, where they encounter a surrealistic gathering of New Agers and Mayan mystics. They meet a local TV reporter (Iazua Larios), who the filmmaker casts in his psychedelic Western. After the film is shot, the misunderstood and egomaniacal filmmaker decides to remain in Mexico, editing his masterpiece, forever.



An experimental, emotional comedy that relates the end of cinema with the end of the world, *La última película* attempts to reimagine the atmosphere and the excitement of the heyday of American independent cinema, alluding to '70s Westerns and road movies, their sense of adventure, and the experiences involved in their creation. Shot with nine different cameras, under the influence of Dennis Hopper's *The Last Movie* and the "nonfiction" film about its editing, *The American Dreamer*, *La última película* is a critical act combining fiction and documentary, looking backwards and forwards at the same time to create a film about the present—it is an infinite, oneiric gesture that attempts to save cinema with one last gunshot. All errors are intentional.

Please note the proper spelling of the film's title is *La última película*. This title applies in all languages, is to be printed with accents, and is not to be translated.

Cinema Scope is two words.

World Premiere, Toronto International Film Festival 2013



CREDITS

A Cinema Scope Production

In Association with Canana Films, Cinematografica, Faliro House, Fischer Film, DOX: LAB

Directed by Raya Martin and Mark Peranson

Starring: Alex Ross Perry, Gabino Rodríguez, Iazua Larios with the amicable participation of René Redzepi

Screenplay by Mark Peranson and Raya Martin

Additional Dialogue: Alex Ross Perry, Gabino Rodríguez

Produced by Mark Peranson

Executive Producer: Christos V. Konstantakopoulos

Co-producers: Pablo Cruz, Tine Fischer, Raya Martin

Associate Producers: Michel Lipkes, Cecile Waitz Søborg

Director of Photography: Gym Lumbera

Camera Assistant: Francisco Ohem

Camera Operators: Raya Martin, Mark Peranson, Alex Ross Perry, John Bruce, Margarita Jimeno, Véréna Paravel

Editors: Lawrence S. Ang, Mark Peranson

Sound: Aldonza Contreras

Sound Editing and Mixing: Corinne De San Jose

Production Designer: Paloma Camarena

Shot on location in Yucatán, Mexico and Copenhagen, Denmark, December 16-23 and November 8, 2012

Filmed on Kodak and recorded on various digital media



PRIZES

Premio Riviera Lab, Riviera Maya Film Festival 2013,
Work in Progress

Jury citation: With its hilarious and poetic heterogeneity, Mark Peranson and Raya Martin's meta-plunge into the unknown succeeds even as it designs to fail, generously evoking past histories while also looking ahead to an impending filmic, cultural, and spiritual apocalypse.

Premio Kodak, Riviera Maya Film Festival 2013,
Work in Progress

Jury citation: Oh, sweet irony! Film is still, perversely, alive, even if Raya Martin and Mark Peranson work hard to convince us otherwise. A prize in the spirit of contrarianism, suiting a contrarian film.



THE
MOTION PICTURE
CODE AND RATING
ADMINISTRATION
HAS RATED
THIS MOTION PICTURE



RESTRICTED
UNDER 17 REQUIRES ACCOMPANYING
PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN



DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

What is cinema? As cinema's boundaries are, like the universe, constantly expanding, this question has become both as fundamental and redundant as say, the search for life's meaning. But the earnest exploration of its contemporary existence extends to why we continue making films, how we make them, up until the very basic observation of the people involved in making them. When confronted by the Apocalypse, the very basis of cinema becomes as existential as life itself: its philosophy, the materiality, is questioned... In the same way that the existence of an idea in film is stretched in spatial and temporal circumstances, filmmakers at the end of time and place are gathered as forces, energies, with answers as vague and clarifying as the question posed: instead of asking if we are approaching the End of Cinema, ask rather, how would the last movie in the world look like? A question probably in the same vein as, what would you plan to do if you knew the world was going to end? What would your last meal be? What does the last movie have in common with the first?



THE END OF CINEMA

Phil Coldiron on La última película

What comes at the end of cinema?
Not what comes *after* cinema—a good question for marketing gurus like Spielberg and Lucas and Cameron to lock themselves in a room and argue until they expire, choked on their own hot air—but right there at the end, in death tranquil or terrifying or both, as the movies take stock of a lifetime of failures (and, okay, more than a few successes). As a moment, it's the end of both the particular (the last movie) and the universal (the cinema): the world-as-projector clicking senselessly onward,

the projectionist long gone (or maybe never around to begin with), and the cinema-as-film caught in the stasis of perpetual motion, run through, ass-end slapping ceaselessly toward disintegration against its one true companion. When that delivery finally comes in the form of a complete formal breakdown—the comfortable order of the classical style churned into a maelstrom of frames and pixels (cf. *Film socialisme* [2010])—will the unifying force of Bazin's trusty old ontology hold? “Now, for the first time, the image of things is likewise

the image of their duration, change mummified as it were.” If one accepts that the cinema will come to an end before the world does (i.e., as long as there’s still duration; figuring what comes after duration is the real question of what comes after cinema), then there’s no reason to think otherwise—even a radically decentred cinema, one whose tatters are sent flying off in infinite directions, both analogue and digital, would still hold together around this core of mummified change. It might finally be a real big bang for the movies, which is to say that as long as there’s a world, what comes at the end of cinema isn’t an end at all: it’s cinema.

This though still leaves questions about the particular. How will we know when we’ve come to the last movie? Will the last movie know it’s the last movie? What will the view of cinema be from this vantage point at its end? The last movie, as both an expectation and an object, is necessarily subjunctive, a tense that Spanish handles with far more grace than English, so it’s with good reason that Raya Martin and Mark Peranson have returned to *The Last Movie* (1971) as *La última película*.

Not so much a remake as an act of salvage—Hopper’s film is just one among many sources scrapped and taken for parts, whether jokes or narrative beats or soundtrack choices or shot compositions—*La última película* shifts the location from the earlier film’s Peru to Mexico, where Hopper first intended to make it, at another moment in which an end is not an end: the culmination of the Mayan long-count calendar, the event widely referred to in the media as The Mayan Apocalypse. Of course humanity did not come to an end on December 21, 2012, and it remains to be seen whether the New Age reading of the event as a shift between fields of consciousness in fact occurred, but regardless, one could hardly ask for a more apt site at which to situate the last movie, an object which is apocalyptic in the sense that it is, to borrow Jonathan Rosenbaum’s description of *The Last Movie*, “simultaneously about many things...and nothing at all”—which could stand to be extended from “many things” to “everything” since what, after all, is the Apocalypse if not the sudden conflation of everything and nothing?

There is at least one apocalypse here that *does* come

to pass, as Martin and Peranson retain Hopper's hazy arc of a white man drifting toward personal ruin in the Global South. (Given the fact that the film also retains *The Last Movie's* staunch commitment to shooting on location, it's an alignment of production and narrative that inevitably recalls everything from Conrad to *Tabu* [1931] to another Hopper project, *Apocalypse Now* [1979].) The white man here is a filmmaker played by Alex Ross Perry, who, as in *The Color Wheel* (2011), proves terribly committed to plumbing the depths of his own ego. He is the full embodiment of the interested Western liberal, and as such, fundamentally insufferable—an asshole, as the Sancho to his Quixote, local guide Gabino (Gabino Rodríguez), bluntly puts it during one early bit of ranting about the archeological authenticity of a wall and some trash in comparison to the nearby Mayan ruins.

His filmmaker spends much of the movie spouting off similar pronouncements about his ownwork, the cinema, and the world in general, all of which are self-serious to the point of delusion (modelled in part after Hopper's similar pronouncements in *The*

American Dreamer, the “documentary” made on Hopper's Taos ranch while he was editing *The Last Movie*), an inability to reconcile his rigid sense of superiority—e.g., for him the Mayan pyramids are nothing more than the best movie set that anyone could ask for—with the messy reality of this place the cinema has drawn him to, which, in an almost cosmic manner, marks him for brutal, sacrificial death. If *La última película* only concerned itself with this rending asunder of the myth of the white explorer-filmmaker illuminating dark worlds, it would at least be commendable as a corrective to a trope that remains alarmingly popular, but Martin and Peranson continually discover new avenues of thought down each of the film's many ruptures—fissures which occur both internally via its heterogeneous approach to form (the film makes use of nine different cameras and seven different shooting formats, including 16mm, Super 8mm, and a variety of high-definition digital cameras, and will be presented theatrically on an eighth, 35mm) and deployment of perspective or genre (it makes use of tropes from documentary, the essay film, the historical epic, both the structural and

lyrical avant-garde, melodrama, and science fiction, among others), and externally, as it calls into question many of the axioms at the heart of contemporary world cinema.

Chief among these is its injunction against the performance of culture as an essential function of the global economy, an intervention that hangs over the film from its opening images, in which a man done up in full Mayan body paint for the benefit of the tourists descending on the region stares into the camera before finally cracking a small, exhausted smile and admitting that he's tired. World cinema today finds itself in much the same place: films must dress up their culture of origin in the ways that will most appeal to the cultural elite who make up film festival selection committees and audiences, a situation which has hardened into a set of rules which are every bit as dogmatic as those kept in place to ensure that Hollywood blockbusters turn appropriate profits on their nine-figure investments. We have reached a point where the whole of world cinema seems exhausted by these demands to continue trotting out the worst in their countries (drug problems,

histories of intolerance, authoritarian rule, etc.), as if the only way to get a Western audience to notice their existence is by confirming that audience's fears about a place, and giving them the opportunity to feel suitably horrified—the catharsis of guilt standing in comfortably for any action. Mexico sits at the top of this list, its most lauded films showing the country as nothing but an amoral husk in the wake of the terror of its ongoing drug war. Certainly there is nothing *wrong* with these filmmakers attempting to expose injustice to the world, but one should be weary of a system of financing and exhibition that promotes the perpetuation of such narratives at the expense of any further engagement with the culture.

Martin and Peranson, a Filipino and a Canadian, make no bones about their status as outsiders, using this position as an opportunity to explore the contradictory, or even paradoxical, position of the tourist. On one end, there is Perry's filmmaker, the cynical tourist who claims to know a place better than the locals, and on the other, there are new age pilgrims who have flocked to Chichen Itza for the Apocalypse, naïve individuals

convinced that the earnest endeavour of an all-inclusive resort stay complete with daily meditation sessions near the pyramids confirms them as enlightened citizens of the world. For both the cynical and the naïve tourist, the reality of the situation is one of exploitation: whether finding a film set or finding spiritual purity, the culture of the Other exists only to fulfill a specific need for these bourgeois travelers that isn't fundamentally any different from, say, buying organic kale at Whole Foods. When these two groups finally come into contact in the second half of the film, as Perry and Rodriguez wander the pyramids amongst groups of revellers, loudly mocking the event, Martin and Peranson most clearly open up the space that they have been working the entire time: the film is able to both side with Perry, the cynical tourist who is at least aware of his position as tourist, over the naïve tourist whose exploitation is even more insidious for its lack of awareness, while still undercutting Perry's authority as a commentator with his own well-established inability to view this place as anything other than his for the taking. This double movement of critique leaves only Rodríguez, the

native, in a position of clarity, and indeed, if *La última película* is anyone's movie, it's his.

This centrality is confirmed by his involvement with the film's emotional core, a match of sound and image that is, in its absolute simplicity, one of the most beautiful and moving sequences that the cinema has produced. In an early scene, while driving Perry out of town for a location scout, Rodriguez attributes his affection for the region to a set of photos of his parents in this place many years before, pictures that show them deeply in love. In the moment it seems an off-hand remark, small talk between strangers to fill the time. The duo continue on their adventures until Perry finds himself thrown in jail and the film breaks abruptly from its building narrative momentum to present these photos in a Markeresque slideshow, accompanied on the soundtrack by John Buck Wilkin's "My God & I," rescued from the background of a scene in *The Last Movie* and returned to a place of suitable prominence. These sounds and images are the sudden swelling of an unchecked emotional force, one that obliterates both irony and sentimentality; the entire film flows out from

this single rupture. The effect is not simply to permeate the film with a deep sense of love, but to recontextualize its reflexive and disjunctive structure—which includes the presentation of serial takes as looped segments, various instances of filming the production itself, and the play of formats off of one another in search of their unique affective qualities (an exploration which the movie extends further than any other feature I am aware of)—as an experiment in something like radical empathy.

Seen through the reverberations of this originary love, its constant infolding becomes not an acknowledgment of artifice or relativity, but an attempt at turning cinema back against the impulses, the clichés, and the dogmas that might stand in the way of a true image capable of forcing us to confront an Other in all its complexity. It's in this confrontation that we might reasonably say that everything and nothing finally collapse into one another. Its images—the world floating upside down, a rain of meteors on a rear-projected sky, the bustle of a street or a strip club, two old women perched on a pyramid in the evening sun—are both about everything that is out-

side of each of us, and *about* nothing, in the sense that they are free of discursive distance.

Or at least nearly free, since this attempt must always come up short: this is the very limit between cinema and the world, though Martin and Peranson, in their dogged commitment to chipping away any trace of bullshit from their cinema—an act undertaken in the name of love, which we might also call truth, have come as close as anyone before them, a heritage that includes Griffith and Bresson, Warhol and Costa, the Straubs and Rossellini, Hellman and Fuller. These are all makers of last movies, directors committed to pushing the forms of cinema toward the point where they begin to disintegrate, revealing not their artifice, but their capacity for truth. In the end, Perry's filmmaker—his fate already sealed, speaking perhaps from the afterlife, moments before embarking on a final journey into the pure intensity of red light (recalling another great last movie: *Dillinger Is Dead* [1969])—finds his way to something like clarity: “One dot could serve as the punctuation for all that has come before, and the opening salvo for all that will come after.” This is the logic of the last movie.

J. HOBERMAN ON THE LAST MOVIE

DRUGSTORE COWBOY

A rare revival for Dennis Hopper's megalomaniacal, tripped-out western

Published in The Village Voice, August 8, 2006

The Last Movie, the exhilarating cinematic outrage that incinerated Dennis Hopper's career in 1971, might also be known as *The Lost Masterpiece*—the 35mm print showing for a week at Anthology Film Archives could be the only complete version in existence. Would that it were part of Anthology's permanent collection.

Most simply put, *The Last Movie* concerns the ill-fated production of an American western in Peru—which is to say itself. Most simply explained, the movie allegorizes the implosion of '60s hopes. One of the craziest (and druggiest) movies ever made, it's also blatantly self-deconstructing and meta to the max, albeit produced years

before those terms became commonplace. The closest enterprise to Hopper's is William Greaves's roughly contemporaneous (and long withheld) hall-of-mirrors acting exercise, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*. But that was an indie. Hopper's megalomaniacal follow-up to the mega-success of *Easy Rider* is the single most radical instance of old "new Hollywood" filmmaking in part because he pushes the notion of "uncommercial" to the far side of the moon.

The Last Movie was actually to be Hopper's first. Inspiration hit him in Durango, Mexico, during the making of the John Wayne western *The Sons of Katie*

Elder—"I thought, my God, what's going to happen when the movie leaves and the natives are left living in these Western sets?" Hopper hoped to make *The Last Movie* in 1966 but the project fell through when music producer Phil Spector withdrew financial support; his opportunity came in the wake of *Easy Rider*. Universal gave Hopper \$850,000 and total autonomy (including final cut), so long as he stayed within budget.

Hopper planned to shoot *The Last Movie* in Mexico but feared government censorship—thus the project was mainly shot in the remote mountain village of Chincheros, Peru. Despite difficulties that included the impossibility of viewing his dailies, Hopper finished on schedule—taking 40-some hours of rushes with him to Taos and driving Universal nuts by mulling over his footage for 16 months.

Given *Easy Rider*'s epochal success, *The Last Movie* was the most eagerly awaited picture of 1971. After winning an award at the Venice Film Festival, Hopper's opus opened in New York and broke the single-day box office record at the RKO 59th Street theater, site of *Easy Rider*'s triumphant engagement. But unlike Hopper's first film,

The Last Movie was attacked and ridiculed by virtually every reviewer in America and was withdrawn by its distributor within two weeks. Although it achieved a negative notoriety unsurpassed until *Heaven's Gate*, *The Last Movie* was not a financial boondoggle. Hopper's sin wasn't wasting money—it was something far worse. *The Last Movie* is an act of visionary aggression that desecrates Hollywood's universal church.

On first viewing, *The Last Movie* may appear to be a nonlinear, nonsensical string of non sequiturs—many of them an affront to conventional taste. But far from chaotic, *The Last Movie* involves three interlocking films. The first is a Hollywood western about Billy the Kid directed by Sam Fuller on location in Chincheros. During the course of a particularly violent shoot-'em-up, the actor playing Billy is accidentally killed. Shaken, the stunt man Kansas (Hopper) remains behind, taking up with an ex-whore named Maria and building himself a Malibu-type home on a mountaintop.

Like *The Wild Bunch*, to which Hopper alludes, *The Last Movie* is an apocalyptic western set south of the border. But where *The Wild Bunch* tends to treat

whoring around as boyish fun, *The Last Movie* dwells unpleasantly on the relation between sex, power, voyeurism, and money in a foreign land—it's a critique of American imperialism, cultural and otherwise. Fuller's movie within the movie is a model for a heedless invasion that casually exploits or even destroys the indigenous culture.

Although, ironically, there seem to be no Indians in the Fuller production, they are everywhere around Chincheros—eager to be westernized. Maria feels she must have beauty treatments, demanding a swimming pool, a refrigerator, and a fur coat. For his part, Kansas lives in his own hippie illusion, wandering in and out of the *Easy Rider*-style lyrical interludes hilariously punctuated with close-ups of flowers and scored to insipid folk rock. It is his further fantasy to develop Chincheros as a production site. The only subsequent movie, however, is conceived by the local Indians.

Having watched the shooting of Fuller's western, they restage it as ritual on the abandoned set. Reversing the original procedure, the Indians use make-believe equipment—woven mainly from wicker—but “docu-

ment” actual violence. Kansas, who vainly attempts to disrupt this ritual, is designated “el muerte” and chosen to die at the climax of this second movie—thus triggering the third. Narrative evaporates with Kansas's death and *The Last Movie* turns into a comic documentary of Hopper and his crew. The death scene is played over and over, actors go out of character, the on-set photographer wanders on camera.

This collapse of the fictional story line is superseded by the disintegration of cinematic representation. The movie loses sync, the sound of the camera intrudes, the editing dissolves into black leader, the emulsion is scratched. The shadows refuse to be anything more than shadows, leaving the bemused audience to its own devices. Kansas dies for America's sins but when *The Last Movie* destroys itself it is to liberate us all—or at least, make Hopper's point that, so far as the movies go, everyone is an Indian.

Reprinted with permission of the author.

BIOGRAPHIES

Raya Martin. Born in 1984 in Manila, Philippines. He has currently directed several features and short films. *Now Showing*, an almost five-hour-long film, was screened at the Cannes Directors' Fortnight in 2008. His previous works *Independencia* and *Manila* were shown at the Cannes Film Festival 2009, becoming the first Filipino to screen two films in the festival's main selection in the same year. *The Great Cinema Party* was commissioned as part of the Jeonju Digital Project 2012. Martin's previous feature films, *Buenas Noches, España* (2011) and *How to Disappear Completely* (2013) were screened at the Festival del Film Locarno, where he also served as a jury for the international competition of first and second films in 2011. A retrospective of his works have been featured in Documenta Kassel, New York, Paris, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, and Seoul. Martin is a recipient of the Thirteen Artists Award of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Mark Peranson. A writer, programmer and filmmaker, Mark Peranson is editor and publisher of *Cinema Scope* magazine, for which he was awarded the 2010 Clyde Gilmour Award for contribution to advancement of film in Toronto. As of 2013 he is Head of Programming for the Festival del Film Locarno, having been a member of the Locarno selection committee from 2010-2012, and is also a programming associate for the Vancouver International Film Festival (2000-present). His first film, *Waiting for Sancho* (2008), produced, directed, photographed and edited by Peranson, played at more than 25 film festivals worldwide and as an installation at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in Spring 2013. He played the role of Joseph in Albert Serra's *Birdsong*. His writing has appeared in myriad publications worldwide including *The Village Voice*, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, *Sight and Sound*, *Revolver*, *El Amante*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *Film Comment*.

BIOGRAPHIES

Alex Ross Perry. Alex Ross Perry was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania in 1984. He attended the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and worked at Kim's Video in Manhattan until quitting to make his first film *Impolex*. His second film *The Color Wheel* was distributed theatrically in America and France in 2012 and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award. His next film is *Listen Up Philip*, starring Jason Schwartzman and Elisabeth Moss. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Gabino Rodríguez. Actor, director and poet, he studied theatre at the Centro Universitario de Teatro (CUT) and Biology on the Facultad de Ciencias, UNAM. He has acted in more than 20 movies and more than 20 short films. In 2003 he co-founded with actress Luisa Pardo Urías the theatre collective Lagartijas Tiradas al Sol. Their plays have traveled around the world and garnered various awards. In 2007 he was nominated for an Ariel (Mexican Academy Award) for his performance in *The Girl on the Stone*. In 2008

he participated in the Berlinale Talent Campus during the Berlin Film Festival and was a candidate for The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. In 2009 he won the Janine Bazin Prize at the Belfort Film Festival for his performance in *Perpetuum Mobile*.

Iazua Larios. Actress born in Mexico. She studied dramatic art in Spain, Italy, Belarus and Mexico. While she was based in Barcelona, she started performing with Microscopía Teatro, an independent theatre group that mainly works with objects, toys, and marionettes. Her first film was Gabe Ibañez's short film *Maquina*, which won the Special Prize of the Jury in Clermont Ferrand, and Larios won three special mentions and awards for the film in Spain, France, and Cuba. She was then selected to be part of the main cast in *Apocalypto*, directed by Mel Gibson, and afterwards worked in several film productions, including *The Attempt Dossier* by Jorge Fons, *Spiral* by Jorge Pérez, and *The Guardian* by Sergio Sánchez Suarez.