The Celebration of Life and Death in Mexico: A Book of Life Review

By Emmanuel Gundran

Book of Life (Gutierrez 2014) is an animated film that celebrates Mexican culture and believes in the best of people in the face of hatred and selfishness. The film tells the story of La Muerte (Kate del Castillo), the ruler of the Land of the Remembered, and Xibalba (Ron Perlman), the ruler of the Land of the Forgotten. The two immortal beings bet their realms on two men in the land of the living: Manolo Sanchez (Diego Luna) and Joaquin Mondragon (Channing Tatum). The two of them are smitten for Maria (Zoe Saldana), a girl that they’ve known since they were children. La Muerte bets on Manolo winning Maria’s heart while Xibalba bets on Joaquin winning Maria’s heart. Whoever’s man wins Maria’s heart will rule over both realms of the dead.
The film focuses on Manolo Sanchez, one of the two men in love with Maria, who risks life and limb to be with Maria and give her the best that he has. Through Manolo, the film tells a story of never losing hope in the midst of despair, staying true to yourself, and showing love to all, including your enemies. Manolo faces several challenges along the way to winning Maria’s heart, such as poisonous snakes, bull-fighting, and the threat of banishment to the Land of the Forgotten, where he will truly die. While facing these external conflicts, he also faces some internal conflict. As a descendant of bullfighters, Manolo would rather be a musician than be a bullfighter. This causes tension between him and his family, who expect him to be a great bullfighter like his ancestors. However, in the end, he conquers both of these challenges, staying strong through the darkest times and realizing that he does not have to be someone he is not to be someone great. He learns that true strength does not come from brute force and muscle, but from love and mercy toward all people. Instead of brandishing a sword, Manolo brandishes a guitar, and instead of finishing off a bull by the sword, he plays soothing music on his guitar for the bull.

Jorge R. Gutierrez, the director of the film, original pitched Book of Life to Guillermo del Toro as a tribute to Mexican culture. The film contains references to Mexican cultural iconography such as the Day of the Dead, the day on November 1st when Mexican friends and families remember their loved ones to keep them alive in their hearts, and La Santa Muerte, the goddess of the death. Del Toro says that, to Gutierrez, the film is “about a celebration of Mexico.” He then adds that other parts of the world influence Mexican culture, thus he and Gutierrez included an international element to the film. “We wanted to make the movie eminently modern, but steeped very particularly in our roots and what the Day of the Dead is about, which is celebrating life, celebrating those that came before us” (Chevat). Thus, the film not only has a story rooted in the Mexican Day of the Dead festival but also includes songs not part of traditional Mexican culture like “Just a Friend” by Biz Markie and “Creep” by Radiohead. The film bringing these parts of Mexican culture into the spotlight for audiences definitely makes it a worthwhile watch for those interested in multicultural perspectives.

Though it may not have the same notoriety as a Disney or Dreamworks animated feature, Book of Life (2014) has enough heart and effort to be in league with modern animated films from Disney and Dreamworks.
“People say it can’t work, black and white. Here, we make it work every day. We still have our disagreements, of course, but before we reach for hate, always, always, we remember the Titans.” These are the closing words of Boaz Yakin’s *Remember the Titans*, a 2000 film that tells the incredible story of the T.C. Williams Titans, a high school football team that won the Virginia state high school football championship in 1971. If you’ve seen the film, you know that it’s about so much more than high school football though.

In 1971, school board members stirred controversy in Alexandria, Virginia when they integrated two predominately segregated high schools into one, T.C. Williams. They also decided to name Herman Boone (Denzel Washington), an African American coach from Tennessee, the new head football coach. This move angered even more people in the community, as T.C. had been successful enough under head coach Bill Yoast...
(Will Patton), who himself was headed to the Virginia state high school football Hall of Fame. Yoast’s players from previous years feared their starting spots were in jeopardy with Boone coaching, especially because of his race. They also didn’t stand behind the school boards’ decision, in their opinion Bill Yoast was and would continue to be the head coach of the Titans.

This stance by the white players, as well as their refusal to play on the same team as African Americans, put Herman Boone into a very difficult situation. The black and white players refused to speak, sit on the same bus, or even make eye contact with one another. After seeing the repercussions of this in the school building and also on the field, Herman realized he needed to take immediate action.

In one of the more dramatic scenes of the film, the camera turns the corner and looks upon the scene at T.C. Williams High School on the first day of classes. Suddenly, the audience’s peaceful thoughts in the midst of the beautiful fall weather changes to fear. Hundreds of parents stand in the streets throwing household items at school buses, violently rocking back and forth signs portraying vulgar and extremely racist phrases. The only divider between the protesters and the front doors of the school is the legion of National Guard officers holding up four-foot high windowed shields. Director Boaz Yakin did a terrific job making this scene as realistic as he could have. Yakin makes the audience feel as if they were right there in 1971 watching the whole protest unfold.

Prior to the start of training camp at Gettysburg College, Boone pairs up the players one-by-one, one black teammate with one white one. At first, this led to more fighting, quarreling, and segregation on the team. Two of the biggest fighters against this coach-enforced integration were Julius Campbell (Wood Harris) and Gary Bertier (Ryan Hurst). Julius was an excellent defensive end, quick, agile, athletic, and strong. He also was very set in his ways, and played in a one-man team mindset the majority of the time. Gary, on the other hand, was a returning All-American defensive captain from Yoast’s team. He also was quick, agile, athletic, and strong, but felt challenged by Julius’s athleticism. The two butted heads constantly at the start of camp, and refused to be in the same room with one another. This led to yet another moment where Boone had to make a move, and this move changed everything.

In one of the finest moments in sports film history, Coach Boone wakes up all the players and coaches in the middle of the night and leads them on a run into the unknown dark woods around campus. This scene shows top-notch camera-work by the film crew, rhythmically cutting shots to follow the entirety of the team on the run rather than a specific few. We see teammates pushing each other on the entirety of the run, and by the time Boone stops, the entire team is winded. They look up, and in front of them is the cemetery where the Battle of Gettysburg was fought.

While the players are catching their breath, Boone says, “50,000 men died on this very field, fighting the same battle we’re still fighting in ourselves today. This green field was painted red, bubbling with the blood of young boys, smoke and hot lead pouring through their bodies.” Looking back, the next words that came out of Boone’s mouth were the turning point for the Titans, “Take a lesson from the dead; if we don’t come together, we too will be destroyed, just like they were. I don’t care if you like each other right now, but you will respect one another. And maybe, just maybe, we’ll learn how to play this game like men.”

From there on, the team gradually starts to respect each other and play for more than just themselves. They
continue to face challenges throughout the entirety of the season, vulgar insults from opposing teams and coaches, biased refereeing, segregation's existence in their schools' halls, and so much more. The other teams in the area don’t understand how both black and whites playing together is possible, but coaches Boone and Yoast see it as being about more than just football, rather going through life together as blacks and whites, hand in hand.

The Titans go undefeated on the year, winning the Virginia state championship. In the movie, the Titans win 10-7 in the final seconds as backup quarterback Ronny “Sunshine” Bass provides blocks for injured starting quarterback Jerry “Rev” Harris, who runs the ball around 70 yards for the dramatic score. In real life, the Titans actually won the State Championship 27-0 over Andrew Lewis High School. The Titan’s defense was so spectacular in that game that Andrew Lewis finished the game totaling negative rushing yardage.

In Remember the Titans, Denzel Washington truly captures the power of what happened on the T.C. Williams Titans sideline in 1971. He not only gives off the feeling that he’s actually a football coach, but also really sells the points he’s trying to carry out with the team. Denzel won a BET Award for Best Actor as well as numerous others in his masterful performance.

On a different topic, one parallel I found in Remember the Titans depiction of 1971 Alexandria and 2016’s America is the divide, controversy, and hatred founded on racial tension. We’re in the midst of a national divide on the issues of race and equality, and it’s a rarity to see anything covered on the news other than racial violence, police brutality, or politicians’ controversial opinions, most of which are filled with hate and vulgarity. Turn on any major television network (CNN, Fox News, MSNBC) and there will rarely be a time you don’t see them talking about the corruption in Baltimore, Ferguson, and Charlotte.

Through watching news coverage today, and seeing the Titans interpretation of the riots in 1971 Alexandria, there doesn’t seem like much of a difference. America is in trouble once again, and in general we’re not looking for solutions, we’re continuing to feed the fire. We’re all singing “We Didn’t Start the Fire” by Billy Joel, yet we’ve got a lighter in our back pocket. So what is the solution? How do we fix the unimaginable dilemma we currently face?

We need to look back at how those who lived in the Civil Rights era turned things around. Pivotal figures such as Muhammed Ali and Martin Luther King Jr. got our nation to start talking about the issues at hand with our mouths rather than our fists (unless you count Ali’s boxing career). Now, we may not have a stage to stand on or a press conference to speak to. We may not live in Charlotte, Chicago, or Ferguson. But we can make a difference in our community, we can start healthy conversations about race and equality, and we can walk hand in hand with all races. We don’t have to necessarily agree all the time, but we need to respect one another as human beings. We can walk like Herman Boone.
by Megan Hess

Author’s Note: This is not the first time *Donnie Darko* has been covered on Cinemablography. I actually made my debut on the site when my final paper – an analysis essay on suburbia and choice in the film - was published in the 2nd Science Fiction issue (Interested parties can view that piece here). I believe we are never done discussing a truly good film, especially not one as complex as this one is. Coming back to *Donnie Darko* after two years away has given me new insight. While my previous article touched on Donnie’s (Jake Gyllenhaal) mental illness, this article covers that topic more extensively – in fact, it is the focus. I hope that the two articles work in tandem to provide readers with a more thorough understanding of *Donnie Darko*. - M.H.

One hundred years ago, most people never spoke of mental illness. If they had it in their families, they often chose a approach to the problem, isolating the affected relative from society. Institutions were not suitable for meeting sufferers’ needs, utilizing lobotomies and straitjackets instead of more helpful methods. As we have learned more about mental illnesses, it has become more socially acceptable to discuss them. This happens frequently through art. Many compelling films about mental illness have been made. Like the majority of movies produced today, most have male protagonists. Sometimes this is intentional. Although “overall rates of psychiatric disorder are almost identical for men and women,” according to data from the World Health Organization, some disorders, such as antisocial personality disorder, are more commonly seen in men than women (WHO 1). Other times, it could be because a disorder is viewed as more typically “male” by the public – whether or not this is actually true. Schizophrenia – the illness featured in *Donnie Darko* (Kelly, 2001) – is one of these disorders.

Research from the World Health Organization states “there are no marked gender differences in the rates of severe mental disorders like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder that affect less than 2% of the population” (WHO 1). However, because of the societal expectations and stereotypes of and about mentally ill individuals – schizophrenic ones in particular - Kelly’s film is almost contingent on its protagonist’s gender.

*Donnie Darko* is not a film that is easy to interpret. While a “real” explanation does exist, many alternate fan theories persist. One of these theories states that the film has nothing at all to do with time travel (the actual explanation) and that none of its happenings were real, but just part of a schizophrenic episode that Donnie (Jake Gyllenhaal) had (Smith 1). People who believe this theory justify it by stating (correctly) that visual and auditory hallucinations are characteristic of schizophrenia (Smith 1). While this theory appears solid, it has a flaw: the fact that Dr. Thurman (Katherine Ross), Donnie’s psychiatrist admitted to giving him placebos (Smith 1). While the time-travel explanation is the most correct, I believe that the mental-illness view can coexist with the time-travel view, and that blending them makes an already beautifully complex film even richer.
Donnie (Jake Gyllenhaal), Gretchen (Jena Malone), and Frank (James Duval) enjoy a film before Frank orders Donnie to burn down Jim Cunningham’s (Patrick Swayze) home (Donnie Darko, Kelly, 2001).

From a practical perspective, it makes sense for Donnie to be schizophrenic. First, he is around the right age, since “men tend to develop schizophrenia between the ages of 15 – 24” (A.D.A.M, p.1). He also has the characteristic flat affect, especially in his facial expressions. The primary reason I believe that Donnie has schizophrenia, as well as being affected by the forces of time travel, is the way that Frank’s influence manifests: through violence.

Recent research has continued to confirm the correlation between schizophrenia and violence (Fleishmann, Werbeloff, Yoffe, Davidson, & Weiser). Unfortunately, this has led publics to believe that all schizophrenics are violent, and, therefore, that all schizophrenics are dangerous. To say this would be to make a false assertion; the person most in danger of victimization is the schizophrenic, since approximately 10 percent of people diagnosed with schizophrenia commit suicide (Health Research Funding). Compared with the stereotypes, Donnie’s violence stands out – property damage instead of assault or homicide. Even though he never actually gets caught for his crimes, people still believe that he committed them, based on his illness and past criminal history (he accidentally burned down an abandoned house and was sent to juvenile detention (Kelly 28)). When he dies at the end of the movie, it has nothing to do with his illness. Instead, it is a crime of passion, triggered by the death of his girlfriend, Gretchen (Jena Malone). Gretchen’s death is the driving force for Donnie to go back in time. She saved him by loving him; now he must take the savior role for her.

Donnie and Gretchen have their last significant conversation hours before she will be killed (Donnie Darko, Kelly, 2001).

With some films, changing the gender of the main character would not make too much of a difference. However, in Donnie Darko, it would change the film extraordinarily. When using the schizophrenia narrative, the film relies on audience perceptions of how that particular illness manifests itself – something which happens in a very male way. Their schema has been set by A Beautiful Mind (Howard, 2001) and other male-dominated schizophrenia narratives. Donnie Darko plays out the cultural narrative of women as saviors for damaged men, as well as a world where men perpetrate violence and women are victims. Since women are seen as less capable of committing violent acts, parts of Donnie Darko could seem less believable (at least to an early-2000s’ audience) when viewed through the mental-illness framework. However, other parts would not need adjustment. I believe that Donnie Darko could still be a successful film with a female lead, but it would certainly be a different one.

Works Cited
Dope: The Struggle Is Real

by Mark Young

Recent controversies have highlighted a number of films that have been ignored by the Academy of Motion Picture Sciences. Many of the films that have been deliberately ignored have primarily black leads, or female directors. Amid the controversy critics have made cases for *Straight Outta Compton* (Gray, 2015) and *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014) to be movies that should have been more recognized at the Oscars. Among these, *Dope* (Famuyiwa, 2015) is another movie that deserves more attention than it has received.

*Dope* is a comedy crime-drama about a self-described music geek, Malcolm, trying to survive in a tough neighborhood in Inglewood, CA. After a chance encounter he finds himself in possession of a large quantity of drugs and guns. Malcolm, a straightedge boy, is suddenly thrust head first into an underground culture he has spent his life avoiding.

While this coming of age picture takes a look at the unique struggles of African American youth, *Dope* uses its comedic style to help all cultures relate to the protagonists. Malcolm and his friends are outsiders in their own culture. They are a minority of a minority, they are nerds where the only acceptable expression of self is to embrace drugs and gangs. Malcolm desperately hopes to improve his life through being a good student and all around good person. He quickly learns that life is not that simple.

Malcolm has lived a safe life. He has steered clear of bad influences and the first time he steps out and takes a risk he ends up in an adventure that will shake him to the core. Through a series of mishaps and unlikely events he grows from a boy who only wants to attend Harvard, into a man who wants to challenge the way he is perceived.

The comedic tone of the film will at first take you off guard. Yet, it also makes the content of the story more palatable. If this were a serious film, it perhaps would have gained more notice and yet lost what makes *Dope* unique. We expect comedy to be simple, we're not looking to be challenged by a funny film. However, if the struggles of black youth are only represented in overdramatic tones we become part of a bigger problem. If we only want black culture to cause us to think in certain ways we are limiting an entire people group who have very important stories to tell.

The charm of *Dope* is its light handling of tough subject matter. These kids are in serious danger. People get hurt, and some nearly die. It is funny to watch kids come up with creative new ways to sell drugs and get one over on their mentors. Yet the reality of the situation is not lost in the laughs. As soon as you start to relax *Dope* brings you back to reality.

This film is one of the most enjoyable movies I have seen in a long time. I greatly enjoyed the humor, while also being
challenged by the deeper messages the film presents. Malcolm’s struggle with bullies, college, gangs, girls, and disillusionment are universal and still unique. Overall, Dope is a film to which we can all relate, I highly recommend this film currently streaming on Netflix.

The Past and Present of Pixar: The Pioneer of 3D Animated Films

10/11/2016

By Emmanuel Gundran

Pixar has become one of the most famous animation studios in the film industry. They have created some of Disney’s biggest hits such as Toy Story (Lasseter 1995), Finding Nemo (Stanton and Unkrich 2003), and The Incredibles (Bird 2004) with noticeable improvements in their animation style with each successive film they create. Looking at the history of Pixar, one can track how far Pixar has come with capturing human expression and visually humanizing even the most everyday objects.

From 1979 to 1989, the fledgling digital animation company Pixar would evolve from the computer division of Lucasfilm and prove it can stand on its own. In 1984, when Pixar made their first short called The Adventures of André and Wally B (1984), they were still the “LucasFilm Computer Graphics Project.” For the time during which it was made, the short demonstrated, in the Pixar website’s own words, “ground-breaking technology such as complex flexible characters, hand-painted textures, and motion blur.” (Pixar 2016) It created a narrative using animation technology that no other film studio was using at the time. However, compared to what Pixar would make in later years, this was only the beginning. The characters from André and Wally B (1984) were put together using very simple shapes and movements and the film was incredibly short, being roughly two minutes long. Then, in 1986, Steve Jobs purchased Lucasfilm’s Computer Division and establishes it as an independent company called “Pixar.”
A few years later, in 1991, Pixar makes a deal with Disney “to make and distribute at least one computer-generated animated movie” (Pixar 2016). The film that came out of this deal was Toy Story (1995), which made history as the first computer generated feature film. During a time when films such as Jurassic Park (Spielberg 1993) and Terminator 2: Judgment Day (Cameron 1991) used computer-generated images to create creatures and objects impossible to make on a set, Pixar used them to create the entire visual element of a film. Toy Story (1995) accurately reflects human emotion more than Pixar’s previous shorts. Though the human characters themselves are neither the focus of Pixar’s early films nor very visually appealing, Toy Story (1995) channels their humanity through the toys who make up most of the characters. Each toy from the film is expressive and unique, with each one based on real-life toys such as piggy banks and toy soldiers that are used as the base for their personalities.

As of the last four years, Pixar has advanced in huge ways technologically. Take Brave (Chapman and Andrews 2012), for example, which demonstrates a vast improvement in animation through realistic hair on humans and animals and expressive, uniquely designed human characters. These two aspects of the film’s animation have grown from previous Pixar films. In Monster’s, Inc. (Docter, Silverman, and Unkrich 2001), Pixar brought one of the film’s main characters, Sully, to life by individually animating each hair on his body. Similarly, the bears in Brave (2012) have fur coats composed of individually animated hairs that are detailed to the extent that they respond realistically to being soaked in water. The Incredibles (Bird 2004) was the first Pixar film to make humans the main characters and give them a wider range of facial expressions and body types. Brave (2012) continues this trend with its uniquely designed human characters, ranging from the large, imposing, and boisterous King Fergus to the youthful, scrappy, and confident Merida. Since Brave (2012), With their films such as Inside Out (Docter 2015), Finding Dory (Stanton and MacClane 2016), and the upcoming film Coco (Unkrich 2017), Pixar continues to prove itself the pioneer of animated feature films in the modern film industry.
Ghostbusters 2016: Gut (& Ghost)-Busting Good Fun

10/7/2016

by Megan Hess

Although 2016 still has a few months left in it, I think it is fair to say the new Ghostbusters reboot is the most polarizing movie of the year. Die-hard (mostly male) fans of the original mourned this “bastardization” of their beloved classic and swore it would be nothing less than a horrendous mess. Female entertainment writers and feminists cheered the idea of a woman-centered remake, predicting a fantastic success. In the end, both sides managed to get their way...somewhat. Ghostbusters (Feig, 2016) performed poorly at the box office, dashing fans’ hopes for a sequel and making the people who predicted its failure cackle with glee. At the same time, the film received mixed critical reviews – not all good, but not all bad, either. The reviewers who praised the film spoke highly of its strengths.

In my opinion, Ghostbusters 2016 was one of the summer’s best comedies that did not get the praise (or revenue) it deserved. The Internet put an unfair amount of pressure on the cast and crew. Ghostbusters 2016 got put in a double bind: if it deviated too much from the original, fans would complain it was not staying true to the spirit of Ghostbusters, but if it imitated its...
 predescessor too much, then it is just trying to be a gender-swapped copy. While certainly not perfect by any means, labeling Ghostbusters as the worst film ever made – or even the worst reboot ever made – is unfair. While the basic storyline isn’t anything earth-shattering in itself (instead of “boy meets girl,” think “girl meets ghost” times four), the cast – a perfect blend of old and new – elevates it.

The team captures their first ghost at a heavy-metal concert (Ghostbusters, Feig 2016)

After years of studying, writing, and networking, Erin Gilbert (Kristin Wiig) is finally up for tenure at Columbia University. However, fate intervenes, and she is forced to give up the job she thought she loved for her true dream. Instead of teaching physics to a lecture hall full of coeds, she ends up trekking all over New York City chasing down ghosts. If that sounds like a tough job for someone insulated from the world in the ivory tower of academia, fortunately, she has an unforgettable crew of ladies to back her up: her former best friend (and fellow co-author of Ghosts from Our Past (Both Literally and Figuratively): The Study of the Paranormal) Abby Yates (Melissa McCarthy), former MTA employee ghost neophyte Patty Tolan (Leslie Jones), and Abby’s new research partner, zany engineer Jillian Holtzmann (Kate McKinnon). As they battle ghosts, the team’s friendship is a bastion against the world’s disbelief – even as they have to save it from a power-crazed loner (Neil Casey) intent on bringing ghosts from the spirit realm into the human world to wreak havoc.

Erin (Kristin Wiig, right) isn’t sure what to think of Holtzmann (Kate McKinnon, left) on first meeting her (Ghostbusters, Feig 2016)

Ghostbusters is fun viewing for several reasons (like the team’s cool ghost-busting gadgets and goofy dance moves) – all that never would have come to pass with a different cast and crew. While I would have loved to see a woman direct Ghostbusters - in an ideal world, Nora Ephron, but she unfortunately passed away in 2012 – Paul Feig was a good choice to lead the project, considering he specializes in female-centric comedies. He and Katie Dippold reunited for Ghostbusters, the first film they’ve worked on together since The Heat (Feig, 2013). Despite its lack of Sandra Bullock, Ghostbusters is stronger and better than this female buddy comedy. At times, it almost feels like a more refined version of what The Heat tried to accomplish – people overcoming their differences to work towards a common goal, and becoming close friends in the process – but with less of Feig’s signature raunchy humor. Releasing the film as PG-13 was probably a good choice from a financial\ marketing perspective, but seeing Feig’s crass and cheeky humor at its best in Bridesmaids (Feig, 2011) and Spy (Feig, 2015) made me wish for an R-rated cut of Ghostbusters.
Holtzmann (Kate McKinnon) plays a practical joke on her teammate Erin while they search the basement of a theater for ghosts (Ghostbusters, Feig 2016)

However, Ghostbusters does not need adult jokes to make its audience laugh. The cast has enviable chemistry in the way their personalities play off each other. (It helps that they have all been on Saturday Night Live as either guest stars or cast members.) They are all hilarious, and all in completely different ways. Kristin Wiig can do ‘serious’ characters well, which makes her a good fit for the type-A Erin Gilbert. Conversely, Kate McKinnon’s off-the-cuff one-liners and giftedness in physical comedy, as well as her overall irreverent demeanor means that only she could play Jillian Holtzmann. Leslie Jones brings her signature enthusiastic energy to playing Patty Tolan, while Melissa McCarthy’s Abby Yates has the same sweet core as all of her most well-known characters. Instead of boxing their cast into prescribed character archetypes, Feig and Dippold let the leads be themselves, which I believe is the essence of what makes Ghostbusters so relatable and endearing. One exception, of course, is Chris Hemsworth, who does a delightful take on the “dumb blonde secretary” trope. He so rarely gets to play comedic roles (aside from a few one-liners in the Avengers films) that it seems a little jarring at first, but then becomes a perfect fit. Hopefully Ghostbusters’ bad press did not sink Hemsworth’s comedy career…..

As the Ghostbusters’ lovably dim-witted secretary Kevin, Hemsworth may look like Clark Kent, but he has none of the character’s intellect (Ghostbusters, Feig 2016)

For all its successes, Ghostbusters, like every film, has its flaws. While the cast could not be better, some of the actual scripted jokes do not have their same charm. Most of the cameos and moments winking at the original feel forced and flat – except for Sigourney Weaver’s post-credit appearance as Holtzmann’s former mentor. This might cause some to debate if Ghostbusters really did its job – to which I would counter, what was its job? If the intent with Ghostbusters was to make a pleasurable cinematic experience under the umbrella of the brand name, I would say it succeeded. Unfortunately, with its box-office records, the Ghostbusters team will not have a chance to fix its mistakes from the first movie through a sequel – so enjoy every minute of Kate McKinnon as Jillian Holtzmann, because it probably will never happen again.

Will the millennial Ghostbusters make an impact equal to its 80s’ forefather? Unlikely. However, that does not make it
unwatchable. On the contrary – not watching *Ghostbusters* means missing out on a fun, frenetic, comedy about female friendship...plus ghosts.

Film Vs. Digital: Looking to the Future

10/4/2016

One of the greatest transitions in film has occurred within the last twenty years, and it happened with very few people noticing. Almost all multiplex movie theaters use some form of digital projection system and have for several years now. Gone are the years of celluloid film being screen for a wide audience. At the turn of the century many film productions began the transition to digital cameras over film. This meant hard drives and memory cards instead of film canisters needing development. About twenty years ago filmmakers realized the usefulness of filming using digital cameras. There was no longer a need to buy and carry film that would only see one use. Instead, a card that could be cleared and used over and over again took its place. This was the birth of the digital age in film.

There are always bumps in the beginning, for anything. This was certainly the case for film. There was much trial and error before filmmakers became comfortable using the new digital technology to their advantage. It wasn’t until the string of success with low budget features hitting it big at the box office when many production companies realized they could cut costs while retaining the same quality from film. There were, however, some who disagreed. Filmmakers like Christopher Nolan, Quentin Tarantino and Terrance Malick pushed back against switching to digital. Shooting on film can offer something for directors and cinematographers that digital do not. Either it’s a cleaner image or crisper colors, but many argue that there is a discipline that comes with film, one they prefer to have over working with digital cameras. That discipline is the care and caution that comes from using film. Making sure the exposure on the film is perfect because you only get one chance is a fantastic motivator to give each shot your best effort. That does not mean film has an advantage over digital. Many cinematographers still prefer to shoot digitally due to the security and sensibility of doing so. As long as you have a battery and a memory card you can film on a digital camera. Then it is simple to transfer your files charge your batteries and be ready for another day on set. Digital can be an effective choice and in the early 2000’s many young filmmakers made it theirs. It started with indie and horror films. The Blair Witch Project (Myrick, Sanchez, 1999) was the first digital film to break box office records when it grossed over $140 million on a budget of less than $65,000. After this, almost every horror film began to shoot on digital cameras, and many more quickly followed.
Mexico's Day of Dead: a celebration of life. Far from being a morbid event, Day of Dead emphasizes remembrance of past lives and celebration of the continuity of life. These colorful altars, which are also an art form and personal expression of love towards one's family members now passed, are not for worshiping but instead for the purpose of remembrance and celebration of a life lived. They are usually layered: the uppermost layer contains a picture or pictures of the remembered deceased as well as religious statues or symbols, especially that of La Virgen Guadalupe; the second layer will contain the ofrendas: toys are usually offered for deceased children, and bottles of tequila, mezcal, or atole for deceased adults.

This is not to say that there is a clear winner or loser in the Film vs. Digital debate. Both mediums still have their weaknesses and their strengths. In the end what it really comes down to - and has since the beginning - is preference. The preference of the filmmakers as well as the budget they are working with ultimately dictates how they film. It is hard to deny the greatness of digital cameras when also looking at the accessibility to young up and coming filmmakers. Many now get their start shooting films digitally. A whole generation of great filmmakers is being born from the digital revolution.

There is no winner or looser, one is not better than the other. At the end of the day, though, when you go to the theater to see a movie, more often than not it will be shown on a digital projector. We live in a digital age and the future holds great progress that is still to be made.

0 Comments