

## Department of Cinematography

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### Final Thesis Evaluation

Author: **Carlos Mario Mahecha Castañeda**

Title: **„CINEMATOGRAPHY IN THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON“**

**Technique, Ideology and Ethics of the Cinematographer**

Evaluation by the Thesis Mentor ☒ X

Evaluation by the Opponent ☐

Author of Evaluation (name, surname, department): **MgA. Klaus Fuxjäger , KK**

#### Evaluation of the content and resulting form of a theoretical Thesis:

Appropriate choice of Thesis objective and approach      A

Relative completeness of the literature search in relation to the topic      A

Ability to adopt a critical approach and use specialised literature sources      B

Logical structure of the Thesis, continuity and proportionality of chapters      B

Linguistic level and style      B

Compliance with the bibliography standards (no thesis may be recommended for defence if there are multiple quote sections indicating no source in the text      A

Sufficient extent of images, justification for and appropriateness of such images, graphic representation      B

Originality of the Thesis, contribution to the field of interest      B

#### Overall Evaluation of the Thesis (A-F)      B

*(explanation: A = outstanding performance exceeding the criteria above, B = above-average performance with minimum errors, C = average performance with an acceptable level of error, D = acceptable performance with a higher level of error, E = performance merely satisfying the criteria, F = unacceptable performance)*

#### Individual verbal evaluation of the theoretical Thesis:

**This thesis is a very personal research about filmmaking in the Colombian amazon. Our student Carlos, who comes from Colombia himself, seems to have a very intimate relationship to this jungle and he gets involved not only with the filmmaking itself, but points out various cultural, ethnological, political and sociological matters. This wider approach could of course lead to some**

generalizing and even superficial statements, but Carlos managed quite well to find a balance between describing filming techniques, approaches, social, ethnical and economic consequences. We had quite intense communication interchanging ideas, corrections and guidelines, so I think the result is a quite readable, interesting debate.

Carlos describes three very different productions, which were filmed in the amazon:

“The Embrace of The Serpent”, dir. Ciro Guerra, DP David Gallego, which is something like a national, rather ambitious author movie dealing with the historical infiltration of European scientists/ missionaries into the Colombian jungle.

“Green Frontier” , dir. Laura Mora Ortega et al, DP Paulo Pérez, a commercial, medium budget Netflix production, which is basically a thriller using the amazon as an exotic, magic background. And “The Inflated Jungle” by Alejandro Naranjo, a small documentary about a series of suicides in an indigenous community.

Carlos goes into technical specs like classical 35mm b/w film with bleach by-pass in the author movie, Sony’s flagship camera Venice for the Netflix production and a semiprofessional device for the documentary. Details of processing the analogue film, MTF curves, color spaces, lighting approaches are dealt with from a DPs point of view, but Carlos is also constantly keeping in mind the broader aspects of those creative choices.

There is a chapter about Francis Ford Coppola’s “Apocalypse now”, describing quite detailed the general filmmaking and technical choices Vittorio Storaro was making, but it is a bit disappointing not to read Carlos’ personal opinion about a completely different way of filmmaking (Hollywood in the late 70ies); seemingly completely opposite technical processing: flashing vs bleach by-pass of the negative; and how Carlos would see the differences to film in the Phillippines, the Amazon or other jungles.

Sometimes I have the feeling that this thesis is not sure if it wants to be a political - social - anthropological manifesto against the overexploitation of the amazon, against showbusiness as such, abusing local communities and locations, or an analyses of filmmaking, or a very technical reference for some equipment.

Nevertheless, Carlos’ wider approach to this thesis, as suggested already by the title, is very sympathetic and positive, not only because it shows that this part of an endangered world is very close to Carlos’ values, but it shows that our student is a responsible, serious person, who reflects on a broader, humanities driven context.

I would recommend to accept this thesis for the graduation commission’s consideration and suggest to evaluate it with grade “B”.



Date: 9.9. 2019

Signature: