



08/06/2018

RENOWNED FILMMAKER AND SCREENWRITER, WERNER HERZOG, RETURNS TO PERU TO SHARE HIS FILMMAKING EXPERTISE

We sat down with key coordinator, Gabriel Meseth, to discuss the recent event hosted by Inkaterra alongside the world renowned German filmmaker and screenwriter, Werner Herzog, who returned to Peru to share his expertise in Lima.

Partnering with Black Factory Cinema, the *Werner Herzog Master Class* event was an opportunity for young filmmakers and enthusiasts to venture through Peru as they learned from the acclaimed Werner Herzog himself. Spanning nearly two weeks, the 48 participants staying at Inkaterra Guides Field Station were proactive in using the natural surroundings to conceive and create their footage, in hopes of ultimately submitting their films to international competitions, once being personally chosen by Herzog.

From marshy walks through *Palma Real* from *Lake Sandoval* to wading across tropical glades to *Gamitana Farm*, participants experienced the atmosphere of Herzog's basecamp and spirit of his advice, amid the wonders of the exuberant surroundings unique to Peru. In our interview with Meseth, he explains how the event unfolded:





What was typical day like for the participants of this event?

"Werner joined the students when filming, visiting one location per day. He would designate a given place as his basecamp, and anyone could reach him there when seeking advice. He would also move around to several locations."



Did the group face any challenges in the Amazon?

"The biggest challenge was to find a story in a new, unexplored place with a different culture and language. Though the Amazon is not a particularly easy place for film production, the Inkaterra team achieved clockwork logistics – from housing and guest services to river transportation."



Herzog has worked in the Amazon before. Why do you think it's a significant place for him?

*"Herzog stated in a recent interview with El Comercio that his soul belongs to Peru. It is the place where he filmed two of his masterpieces – **Aguirre, the Wrath of God** and **Fitzcarraldo**. Films that are listed in Roger Ebert's Great Movies List, and that were named by Martin Scorsese among his personal favourites.*

*These films were almost impossible to make, in extreme conditions. In some extent due to the geography. In Peru, Herzog probably built the willpower that has pushed his body of work. Surely one of the most original, boundary-defying careers in film history with about 70 features. I believe that returning to the Amazon was for him a very emotional experience, going back to a landscape where he spent four years trying to make *Fitzcarraldo* might have brought back many fond memories for him."*



What were the highlights or memorable moments for the team?

*"Highlights were seeing the students relate with people in **Madre de Dios**. Coming from such different cultural backgrounds, it was great to see them trying to communicate despite language barriers. And finally they were able to portray the region through many different perspectives. It was like a huge portrait of what **Puerto Maldonado** is nowadays, especially the encounter of Amazonian nature and cultural traditions with the growing modernity."*



Providing a collective opportunity to learn from one of the most experienced filmmakers of all time, the event was instrumental in bringing a variety of individuals together holding a common interest and love of nature. We are very pleased to have had the opportunity to partner with Black Factory Cinema for this event and, through expression of film, celebrate the natural beauty of Peru in its full glory.



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