

# Creating poetic reality

## on a glacier for *Hunabkú*

### Products

#### Stocks

KODAK VISION2 250D 5205, KODAK VISION2 500T 5218 and KODAK Vision Premier Color Print Film 2393



Argentinean filmmaker Pablo César loves to shoot in risky conditions. He has directed films in the Sahara desert and in northern India. His most recent production, *Hunabkú*, was produced in Patagonia, with much of the action taking place on a glacier that towers 90 meters over the ocean.

"The glacier is constantly making noises that make people think it's about to fall apart," César says. "The winds, the dryness, the rains, all at the same time made the work very complicated, and it quickly became a test of our patience and tenacity."

César asked cinematographer Abel Peñalba to join him on the adventure. The pair had previously collaborated on the feature film *Sangre*. "When we scouted in early 2005, the glacier seemed like a huge white blanket capable of transmitting the necessary peace," says César.

The filmmakers felt that the hostile conditions would bring realism to the acting and images.

"There were no tricks of any kind," César says. "The actors felt the surroundings on their skin. It all implied a true contact with nature. We got soaked from head to toe, nearly freezing to death. I felt that this was the way the camera had to work, too. There was no way we could have got the right feeling in the studio."

### Not convinced

César decided from the start that the movie would be produced in 35mm format. "Despite the advances that digital technology has made over the last few years, I am still not convinced by the results that I have seen," he says. "Besides, the cost of renting one of the really good digital cameras is very high, as is the cost of the transfer processes from digital to 35mm."

Peñalba agreed, "Super 16 would have been easier to work with, especially on the glacier where we had to walk a lot carrying all the

heavy equipment ourselves," he says. "But for this kind of location, with breathtaking landscapes, we needed all the quality that only 35mm can give."

Peñalba relished the opportunity to photograph the dramatic landscape. "The whole movie has a very naturalistic look," he says. "Pablo told me that he didn't want to mark any difference between the real things and the things that you couldn't be so sure were real, so we filmed everything with the same realistic treatment."

In keeping with this approach, Peñalba used "normal" focal lengths and natural light, avoiding strong fill light when possible. On the glacier, he used only soft reflected fill to fine-tune close-ups. He used the Academy 1.85:1 aspect ratio because he felt it best suited the landscapes, and chose KODAK VISION2 250D 5205 and KODAK VISION2 500T 5218 film stocks.

"The 5205 is a great film for every situation, and 5218 was also great

for this project," he says. "We had some problems with generators, and the 5218 allowed us to work in interiors with available light."

### Almost perfect

Because they were 1,000 miles from the nearest lab, dailies were out of the question. Color timer Beto Acevedo of Cinecolor in Buenos Aires oversaw the color timing and printing, which was on KODAK Vision Premier Color Print Film 2393.

"When I returned to Buenos Aires and saw the first film after four weeks of shooting in Patagonia, it was almost perfect," says Peñalba. "Shooting on the glacier was very difficult, but when I saw the results I was very happy."

1 Director Pablo César on location.

2 Actor Boy Olmi in front of a glacier in a scene from *Hunabku*, directed by Pablo César.

Photo by Abel Peñalba