

NICK  
NOLTE

KALIPHA  
TOURAY

CHARLOTTE  
RAMPLING

STELLAN  
SKARSGÅRD

ALBA  
ROHRWACHER



FESTIVAL DE CANNES  
OFFICIAL SELECTION  
2020



COMPÉTITION  
FESTIVAL DE  
DEAUVILLE  
2020

# LAST WORDS

A FILM WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY

**JONATHAN NOSSITER**



STEMAL ENTERTAINMENT, PAPRIKA FILMS, LES FILMS D'ICI & THE PARTY FILM SALES  
present



# LAST WORDS

A FILM WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
**JONATHAN NOSSITER**

Duration: 126'

**INTERNATIONAL SALES**

**The Party Film Sales**

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# SYNOPSIS

What if the last five people on earth in 2085 found joy and delight?

***LAST WORDS*** is a story of astonishing human tenderness and creativity in the face of ecological catastrophe.





# A NOTE FROM JONATHAN NOSSITER



## **IS A POST APOCALYPTIC UTOPIAN FILM POSSIBLE?**

*The world in 2086. Europe is a vast desert.  
Africa and the Americas are under the red sea.*

*There is no more nature.  
Only powdered nutrients in tin cans for the last survivors.*

*There is no more culture.  
Only a few film fragments under the rubble of what's left of Bologna.  
And a few ancient Greek temples left standing in Athens.  
There is no more society. Not even the memory of a handshake.  
Is this a hopeless world? No... thanks to the magic of the human imagination.*

**LAST WORDS** is a film that confronts our species-threatening ecological catastrophes without losing the courage of tenderness or the joy of being together to tell each other stories. Urgent ones. Like the last person on earth in 2086; a young African. The Last African. Embodied by the non actor **Kalipha Touray**, Gambian refugee at the age of 16 who has already seen the end of the world in real life. Together with legendary actor **Nick Nolte** who plays a former film director from a by-gone age, their characters rediscover cinema. And the sense of living. The joy of being together (after enforced solitude), the joy of culture (after so much barbarity), the joy of beauty (after so much ugliness). Above all, they rediscover the need to bear witness. Because at the end of the world everything is important. Like the last pregnancy on earth, which belongs to the venerable **Charlotte Rampling**, playing a Baltic woman of unknowable origins. But also an unknowable future. Or the acts of heroism -or folly- of Polish doctor **Stellan Skarsgard**.

The characters of Kalipha and Nick bring with them on their epic journey to Athens the last film projector on earth -to share the joy of cinema- and the pieces to build the last movie camera. The last home movie. The last witness to the last acts of our species. In Athens they also find the laboratory-garden of Alba Rohrwacher, seeking to reboot nature and save humanity before everyone dies off from a coughing virus.

**LAST WORDS.** A post apocalyptic science fiction or a vision of humanity's last chance today?



# INTERVIEW

## WITH JONATHAN NOSSITER

*Interview conducted by Vincent Remy, published on [Télérama.fr](http://Télérama.fr) on June 3, 2020.*

*With LAST WORDS, filmmaker (and farmer) Jonathan Nossiter, to whom we owe the documentary MONDOVINO, offers us a feature film with prophetic overtones, which ends in Italy against the backdrop of an epidemic...*

*A desolate planet, a sea turned red and a handful of survivors on an island of greenery who regain hope by watching old films - but cough and succumb to a virus... Shot with stars - Charlotte Rampling, Nick Nolte, Stellan Skarsgård - and newcomers - Kalipha Touray, a 19 year-old Gambian refugee who plays "the last human on Earth" -, LAST WORDS is an ecological fable about what remains of Europe in the year 2086.*

*For those wondering why we haven't heard from Jonathan Nossiter since NATURAL RESISTANCE, a documentary about Italian winemakers released confidentially in 2014, that's because the creator of MONDOVINO became... a farmer in the vicinity of volcanic lake Bolsena, between Florence and Rome, growing vegetables in permaculture and developing a "museum of heirloom seeds".*

*At the same time, he was working on his latest odyssey, which he's only just finished after six years of work and filming in Bologna in southern Italy, and in Morocco. Certainly his most ambitious film yet and loosely based on a book by Santiago Amigorena, it is strangely optimistic, because, as Jonathan Nossiter tells us, even when doomed, human beings seek light through culture, a civilizing gesture in the face of catastrophe.*

***Your film resonates uncannily with the massive health crisis we're experiencing...***

I've been working on this film for six years, so it isn't linked to current events. It started off with the increasingly unsettling projections made by scientists with regard to global warming and the loss of biodiversity - and also the observation of the voluntary disappearance of culture from the daily lives of the world's citizens. I now live in Italy and have deep ties to France, Brazil, the U.S. and England. And everywhere, I see the same sickness in action: a new barbarism that scorns culture, along with education and health. We're now paying the price for it.

***Doesn't the film deal first and foremost with the end of the human race in response to a virus?***

Definitely, but that's only a symptom. It was driven by the observation of the decline of culture and agriculture, which are, for me, intimately linked and at the very forefront of all the ecological ills and menaces now threatening the survival of the human race. I just finished the film and I don't have any particular thoughts about what it is, but I do know where it came from: a profound love for cultivated earth and the cinema, for its history, and a sad recognition of the extent to which cinema no longer occupies a place in the agora. It's been on life support for a long time!





Those who do go are 60 and older; Younger people rarely go, and almost never for anything other than the blockbusters. And what is disappearing along with cinema is the importance of being together – it's a social and political act. I think a society becomes extremely weak from the moment its culture loses its social and political aspect. Everything has pushed us toward a society of pure consumption, where culture no longer occupies a sacred place.

***You show a handful of survivors closed in on themselves, but who grow closer around projections of old films – why?***

The imbalances at the root of global warming are going to provoke more and more illnesses in all forms– societal, interpersonal, spiritual. My survivors only total a few hundred,

and their afraid of physical contact. Already, before the coronavirus crisis, whenever I took the subway in Rome, I noticed people avoiding each other's gazes. And I'm very afraid that what little physical contact remains will disappear after this crisis.

I am indeed showing survivors who finally rediscover the pleasure of being together, of being moved, of laughing at old images. I think I shot an apocalyptic film that is full of tenderness, love, and genuine hope. Because I still believe in the power of culture, of wild, real, necessary culture – not in the products of a culture devoted to money. I am convinced that cinema, like books, music and painting, plays an equally essential role in public health. Maybe after this crisis, we'll witness a general awakening and people will rethink their priorities.

***Why did you become a farmer?***

When I arrived in Italy nine years ago, I met Stefano Bellotti, one of the greatest Italian winemakers and a pioneer in natural wines, who I filmed in Résistance Naturelle. He was farming in the hills of Gavi in Piedmont, and left us right in the middle of the harvest in September 2018, at the age of 59. Stefano spent a lot of time passing on his knowledge to young winemakers and so many cultural actors. Thousands of us saw our lives change thanks to him. He definitely changed mine. He was the one who made me understand that the issue of agriculture is the greatest of our time.

***How so?***

The farmers are at the barricades! They're suffering all the blows from climate change. Farming is at the epicenter of all the problems,

and therefore of all the solutions. Stefano told me that any society that reduces the value of agricultural products to such a great extent in just fifty years is a sick society. This society prefers spending money on gadgets whose pointlessness we only perceive in times of crisis. At the same time, devalued food products have also lost their all of their nutritional value. When I decided to grow vegetables, I discovered that it was nearly impossible to find plants that weren't derived from hybrid varieties. We talk a lot about genetically modified organisms (GMOs), but they're only the most extreme expression of hybridization. For decades, we've cross-bred in order to produce bigger fruits and vegetables in larger quantities - to the detriment of their nutritional and gustatory value. And an organic, hybrid apple like the ones we now find in the retail sector has no more nutritional value than a conventional apple.

***In the current crisis, France, like Italy, has favored distribution via supermarkets...***

Personally, I'd be more wary of going into a supermarket than I would an outdoor market. I hope that everyone who is cooped up realizes the extent to which eating mass-market products is making them sick. During confinement, the quality of what we eat becomes all the more important. We know very well that food coming from living things, grown healthily, reinforces the immune system. Choosing the agrochemical industry means weakening your immune system.

***Are you hoping for a reality check?***

The reality check has to be agricultural and cultural. Education, health, culture and agriculture are all part of a circle. We compartmentalize everything, but everything is connected. Without biodiversity, people die. What we're experiencing right now is just the dress rehearsal for what could happen fairly often if we don't radically change the way we live. My film is a cri de coeur. The beauty of culture – like that of plants! – is in its transmission. Every film is linked to history - that of cinema, but also of painting, literature, and music; it comes from the past, and only has meaning in the promise of an exchange with those that come after us. The idea of making a film that won't be seen by younger people fills me with despair. We need to mend our ties with the past - without them, we will lose cultural – and agricultural! – knowledge. We won't know how to react to whatever happens to us.



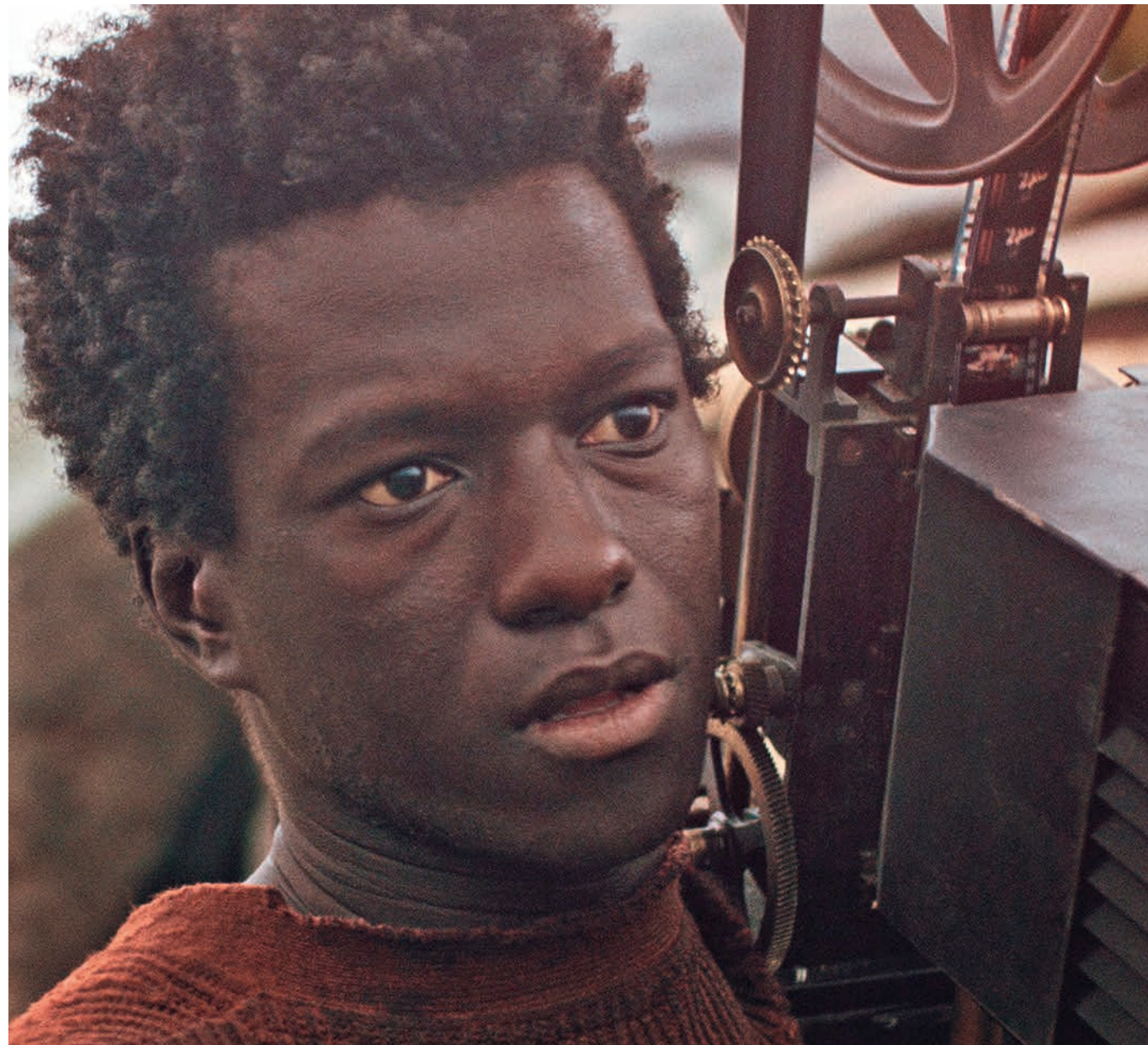


***Have the survivors in your film lost ties with the past?***

Yes, they no longer know that food comes from nature. Only the oldest characters, played by Nick Nolte, Charlotte Rampling, and Stellan Skarsgård, remember. There is one scene I find particularly moving, when the character played by Alba Rohrwacher – a great actress – tries to bring life to a garden in the middle of the ruins of a Greek temple, to grow plants that could be edible. It just so happens that Alba grew up three kilometers from my farm, with a father who was a farmer. It's thanks to her that I live here. Her sister Alice, a filmmaker, told their family history in *THE WONDERS* in 2014. The way Alba's character kisses a seed and puts it in the ground, like a sacred gesture, in the hope that the seed will bring forth life, is the fruit of a deep relationship the actress has with nature. Her relationship to that seed is a love story that gives me a little hope when we really shouldn't have any.

***Did you shoot scenes in Greek ruins?***

In Paestum, south of Naples, in the Cilento region - one of the most magical places in Italy. The archeological site is managed by a young German, Gabriel Zuchtriegel, who's completely invested in the present vitality of the past as well as in regional culture. He opened the park so that we could film in the of middle the temples in an extraordinarily free manner. The film is nourished by that cultural anchoring. Nick Nolte came from California and arrived in the middle of this archeological park, surrounded by farmers and this culture of eating well – a world of the past turned toward the living. He himself was growing an organic vegetable garden at his former home, so he was sensitive to the ecological aspect of the film; otherwise, he wouldn't have joined the project: four months of filming in Franciscan conditions! He was brave because, in the middle of filming, his home in Malibu burned down – he lost everything –



but he decided to stay. Charlotte Rampling, who arrived the day he got the news, convinced him to...

***Have you been confined in Bolsena since the end of this project?***

Yes, and I don't know if the film will be released in six months or in a year. We're at the epicenter of Etruscan culture here. My associate, Max Pertini, a young farmer who's never left his land, is passionate about Etruscan art and civilization. He has that memory inside of him. In the way he works a vegetable garden, I instantly saw an approach towards plants that is very similar to my love for cinema. He has a very free relationship with plants; he doesn't impose himself on them; he tries to channel energies. Even the construction of the garden is taking on a shape that I'd call "Cassavetesian"; it seems a little anarchic, a little wild, but for those that have the patience to really look, there's an aesthetic form inside that freedom and wildness. Learning with Max, working with him, doesn't follow the logic of productivism – even if we are there to make a living. I'm still a novice, but I feel very close to his work. And I get the impression that what I've done in film has prepared me to work alongside him with plants.

***Non-hybrid plants...***

Absolutely. Were living off of a vegetable garden, but also an heirloom seed nursery. Max and I are trying to create a living museum. We're taking inspiration from an extraordinary man – Jean-François Berthelot – who for the past thirty years has been developing the world's largest museum of living wheat in the southwest of France. We have the same ambition for heirloom vegetables! Researching heirloom seeds is like preparing for a film that I won't have the burden of having to shoot. We're scouting deep in the heart of Puglia or Sicily, and finding old farmers who have kept tomato varieties that everyone's forgotten about because the yield is a bit smaller, and because they're a bit more fragile. We also go to safeguard institutions where a few seeds still survive in old refrigerators from the 1950s. These experiences are a little sad because the authorities give these heroes and heroines no support whatsoever. In Battipaglia, a town renowned for its mozzarella di buffala, there's a regional institute called CREA, which is dedicated to the preservation of heirloom seeds from Cilento. Thanks to the director at Paestum, we met an extraordinary woman there named Rosa Peppe, who has devoted thirty years of her life to local asparagus. She works in a building that expresses all the sadness of Italian governmental institutions. Everything in it is run down while, at the same time, so much money is being invested in industrial monoculture.

***Do you think this can be challenged?***

I don't know. We're experiencing a moment that could definitively change society– it's certainly the most transformative event since the Second World War. We don't talk enough about the enormity of what this health crisis represents for the future, about its link to climate change and the destruction of nature. The choices before us are enormous. If we manage to transform this terrible event by rethinking our world, by putting culture and agriculture at the center of our thinking, it will be a good thing for mankind. If not, it'll be an alarm bell ringing. We can be sure that this planet will not support the presence of humankind much longer if we don't rediscover the joy of Franciscan frugality.

***You've said that LAST WORDS will be your final film...***

In 2014, I said that I wanted to make a final feature film before dedicating myself entirely to agriculture. I don't know if this will be my last film, but I am certain that my life will now be focused on agriculture, on the very cinematic joy of working this land and establishing this heirloom seed bank. I have a lot of exchanges with younger people thanks to this agricultural activity, that I maybe wouldn't have with film. Even in the face of catastrophe, I'm searching for vitality. But there is a lot of hope for agricultural renewal thanks to younger people – I'm trying to steal their vitality, or at least to experience it...

# THE FILMS IN THE FILM

« **TARZAN THE APE MAN** » W.S Van Dyke  
© Warner Bros - 1932

« **BESTIA THE POLISH DANCER** » Aleksander Hertz  
Public domain : Filmoteka Narodowa - 1917

« **ANDREJ RUBLEV** » A. Tarkovskij  
© Mosfilm - 1966

« **SHERLOCK JR.** » Buster Keaton  
Public domain - 1924

« **METROPOLIS** » Fritz Lang  
© Murnau Stiftung - 1927

« **SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS** » Preston Sturges  
© Universal Pictures - 1941

« **TAMPOPO** » Jûzô Itami  
© Films sans Frontières - 1985

« **RISATE DI GIOIA** » Mario Monicelli  
© Titanus - 1960

« **INTERVIEW : DENNIS POTTER PAR MELVYN BRAGG** »  
© LWT for Channel 4 - 1994

« **L'ARROSEUR ARROSÉ** » Louis Lumière  
© Association Frères Lumière - 1895

« **UN CHIEN ANDALOU** » Luis Buñuel  
© Films sans Frontières - 1929

« **CANDY SAYS** » Beth Gibbons  
© Sony ATV - ARTE - 2003

« **MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA** » Dziga Vertov  
Public domain - 1929

« **THE MEANING OF LIFE** » Terry Jones, Terry Gilliam  
© Universal Pictures - 1983

« **LE SQUELETTE JOYEUX** » Louis Lumière  
© Association Frères Lumière - 1898

« **CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG** » Ken Hughes  
© MGM - 1968

« **SPEEDY GONZALES** » Peppino Di Capri  
Public domain - 1962



# FILMOGRAPHIES

## NICK NOLTE / SHAKESPEARE

Hollywood legend for five decades, Oscar nominated, Golden Globe winner for Barbara Streisand's *PRINCE OF TIDES*, star of 48 HOURS with Eddie Murphy, Terence Malik's *THIN RED LINE*, Sidney Lumet's *Q&A* and recently co-star with Robert Redford in *A WALK IN THE WOODS*.

## CHARLOTTE RAMPLING / BATLK

English actress, nominated for the Academy award in 2016 for *45 YEARS*, siren of Visconti, Woody Allen, Nagisa Oshima, Sidney Lumet and many others.

## STELLAN SKARSGARD / ZYBERSKI

Swedish actor, star of numerous Lars Von Trier films including *BREAKING THE WAVES*, and also David Fincher's *GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO*, Gus Van Sant's *GOOD WILL HUNTING*, *PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN*, among many others.

## ALBA ROHRWACHER / ANNA

Italian actress, winner of the Venice film festival's Golden Lion for best actress for *HUNGRY HEARTS* (2014) and six-time winner of the Globo d'Oro and the Davide di Donatello for numerous films, including *GIOVANNIS' FATHER*.





# CAST

SHAKESPEARE  
KAL  
BATLK  
ZYBERSKI  
ANNA  
DIMA

NICK NOLTE  
KALIPHA TOURAY  
CHARLOTTE RAMPLING  
STELLAN SKARSGARD  
ALBA ROHRWACHER  
SILVIA CALDERONI

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF MARYAM D’ABO

# CREW

DIRECTOR  
WRITTEN BY  
INSPIRED BY THE BOOK  
BY  
CINEMATOGRAPHER  
SOUND  
EDITOR  
SOUND MIX  
ORIGINAL MUSIC  
COSTUME DESGINER  
SET DESIGNERS

JONATHAN NOSSITER  
JONATHAN NOSSITER AND SANTIAGO AMIGORENA  
« MES DERNIERS MOTS »  
SANTIAGO AMIGORENA (ÉDITIONS P.O.L.)  
CLARISSA CAPPELLANI  
MAXIMILIEN GOBIET  
JONATHAN NOSSITER  
STÉPHANE THIÉBAUT  
TOM SMAIL  
STEFANIA GRILLI  
MATTEO MONTEDURO  
FRANCESCO BOLOGNINI  
MASSIMILIANO PETRINI  
CRISTINA BARTOLETTI  
VALERIO ROMANO  
MARCO SERRECCHIA  
STEMAL ENTERTAINMENT  
RAÏ CINEMA  
DONATELLA PALERMO  
JONATHAN NOSSITER  
PAPRIKA FILMS  
LES FILMS D’ICI  
LES FILMS DU RAT  
LAURENT BAUJARD  
SERGE LALOU  
SANTIAGO AMIGORENA  
GIAN LUCA GARGANO  
LUC HARDY  
SAGAX ENTERTAINMENT  
JOUR2FÊTE  
THE PARTY FILM SALES

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PRODUCERS  
  
COPRODUCED BY  
  
COPRODUCERS  
  
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS  
  
FRENCH DISTRIBUTION  
INTERNATIONAL SALES

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