

# PREHISTORY IN THE SEVENTH ART

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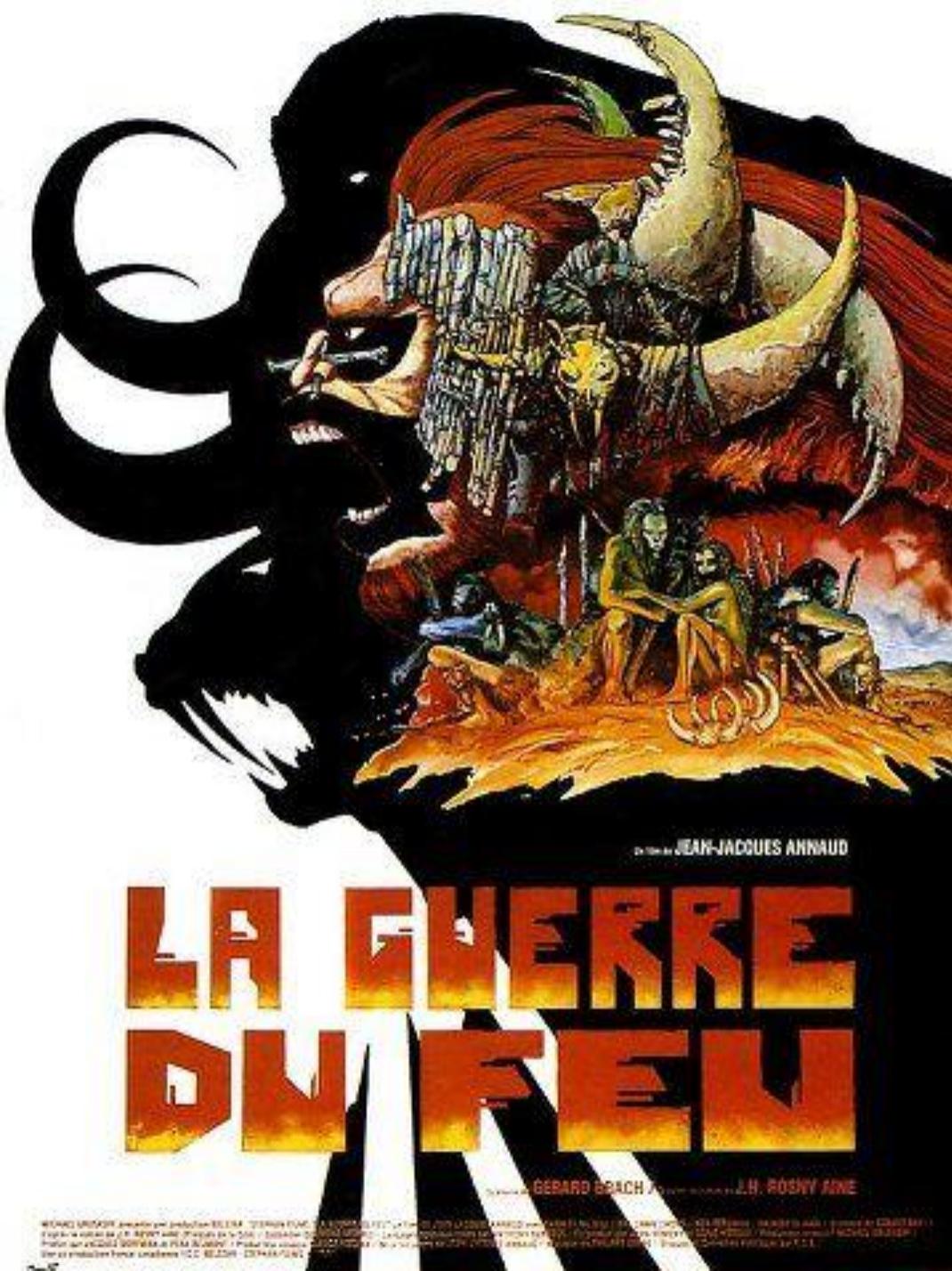
# The Relevance of Cinema

2

- ▶ Cinema is a widespread form of art and nowadays more easily available
- ▶ It can function as a platform for science to reach out to the public (e.g. prehistoric archaeology)

## Methodology

- ▶ Analysis of feature films through an archaeological lens
- ▶ Defining the rights and wrongs for each film in terms of “prehistorical” accuracy



**Title:** La Guerre du Feu

**Director:** Jean-Jacques Annaud

**Country:** Canada/France

**Running Time:** 100 min

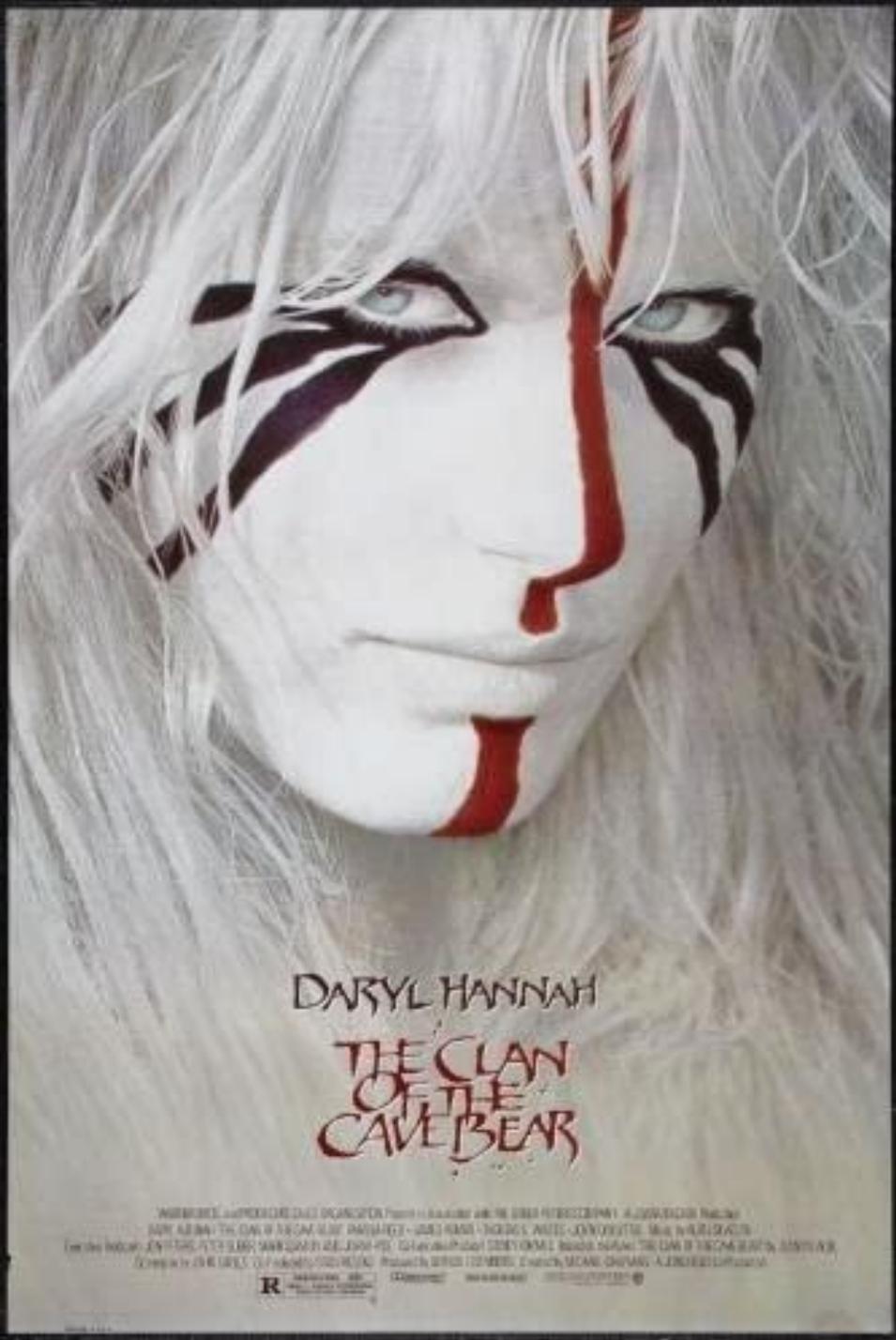
**Year of Release:** 1981

**Rights:**

- ▶ Deals on pertinent anthropological issues of interspecies relations

**Wrongs:**

- ▶ Blatant anachronisms
- ▶ Ape-like portrayal of *homo erectus* and *homo neanderthalensis*



**Title:** The Clan of the Cave Bear

**Director:** Michael Chapman

**Country:** United States of America

**Running Time:** 98 min

**Year of Release:** 1986

### Rights:

- ▶ Portrayal of intragroup and interspecies social relations
- ▶ Physical appearance of Neanderthals
- ▶ Mixed communication strategies

### Wrongs:

- ▶ Near absence of lithic tools
- ▶ Presence of the sling

MEL GIBSON'S  
A P O C A L Y P T O



NO ONE CAN OUTFRAN THEIR DESTINY.

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5

**Title:** Apocalypto

**Director:** Mel Gibson

**Country:** United States of America

**Running Time:** 138 min

**Year of Release:** 2006

**Rights:**

- ▶ Excellent showcase of hunter-gatherer societies
- ▶ Variety and accuracy of tools/utensils/structures
- ▶ Creative ornaments and body image

**Wrongs:**

- ▶ Hunting device of dubious efficiency and existence



**Title:** Alpha

**Director:** Albert Hughes

**Country:** United States of America

**Running Time:** 96 min

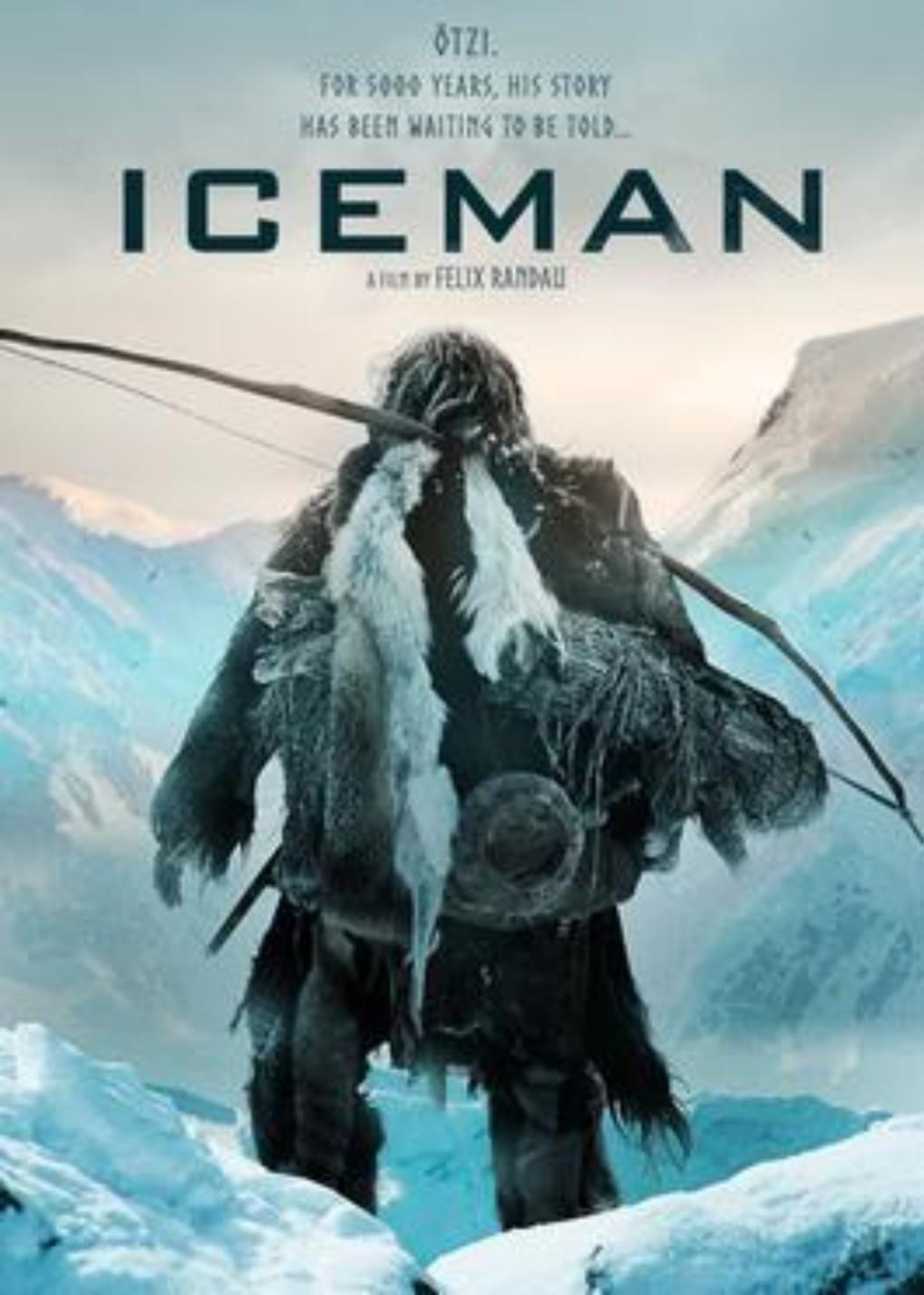
**Year of Release:** 2018

### Rights:

- ▶ Stone knapping
- ▶ Survival strategies
- ▶ Human-wildlife interaction

### Wrongs:

- ▶ Megalithic monuments
- ▶ Cave lion bearing the canines of a saber-toothed cat



**Title:** Der Mann aus dem Eis

**Director:** Felix Randau

**Country:** Austria/Germany/Italy

**Running Time:** 96 min

**Year of Release:** 2017

7

**Rights:**

- ▶ All aspects of life: social, economic, materialistic
- ▶ Fidelity to Ötzi's belongings

**Wrongs:**

- ▶ Absence of the famous tattoos

# Discussion

- ▶ Wrong elements may perpetuate myths, or create new ones, about past societies
- ▶ Right elements become a means of education
- ▶ We know little about prehistory, which allows artistic liberties, but these can be done within scientific reasonability
- ▶ Both science and film should not be perceived as conveyors of absolute truths

# Conclusions

- ▶ Cinematography is an excellent tool for dissemination of archaeological knowledge
- ▶ Writers, producers and directors intending to be faithful should consult experts
- ▶ This cooperation is beneficial to both parties



Thank you and stay safe!