

 **PRAGDA** | SPANISH FILM CLUB

DISCUSSION GUIDE



LA SUPREMA

A film by Felipe Holguín Caro

Colombia / 2023 / 83 min
Spanish with English subtitles

BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before watching a film, it is important to know the current events and history of the country that film comes from. Learning about the filmmaker is also a relevant way to gain insight on the context in which the film was produced. You can learn more about Felipe Holguín Caro at <https://pragda.com/film/la-suprema/>

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The story behind *La Suprema* is fictional, but it is inspired by real-life experiences and social realities in rural Colombia. La Suprema is the name of a real village located near María La Baja and Cartagena, in northern Colombia. Like many small, remote communities in the Colombian Caribbean, it has suffered from marginalization, lack of infrastructure, unreliable access to electricity, and limited communication with the outside world. One key historical influence was the legendary Colombian boxer Antonio Cervantes, aka "Kid Pambelé", whose international success in the 1970s brought attention to Afro-Colombian communities like San Basilio de Palenque. While the film is not directly about him, elements of his story and legacy clearly influence the film's themes.

INTRODUCING THE FILM

A **film synopsis** is a piece of text designed to summarize the film's narrative, genre, style, and key participants in a way that appeals to a wide audience. The synopsis is part of the film's marketing process and tends to follow a traditional format. Read this synopsis for *La Suprema*:

Teeming with irrepressible energy, *La Suprema* takes us back to 2001 Colombia and to a tiny and remote village in the Caribbean region far from any beach and seemingly lost in time.

Laureana is a strong-willed teenager who's not about to conform to what society or her abuela have in store for her. When she finds out via the newspaper that her estranged uncle is days away from fighting in a boxing world championship in Venezuela, she ignites a spark that will quickly get the whole town on board with watching the match live on national television. The problem? It may be the 21st century, but the village has no electricity and no one has a TV set.

Laureana enlists the help of Efraín, the local trainer who discovered her uncle years ago. After much hesitation, he agrees to follow her lead and set sail for the big city. All odds are against them, but they know this history-making moment might put their town on the map and it is worth giving it their all.

From the film synopsis, can you imagine the genre and tone of the film?
From this same text, try to identify the main events of the film's plot and the socio-political context of the film.

- Do you think that the film will have a political message? Cite specific language from the synopsis to support your answer.
- How do the trailer, poster, and still images encourage you to watch the film?
- Viewing the marketing materials alone (i.e. trailer, poster, and still images available at <https://pragda.com/film/la-suprema/>) without the aid of the synopsis, can you make any assumptions regarding what the film is about?



AFTER WATCHING THE FILM:

NARRATIVE

- > What motivates Laureana to bring the boxing match to her village, and how does this drive the story forward?
- > How does the absence of electricity and modern conveniences shape life in *La Suprema* and influence the plot?
- > In what ways does Laureana's relationship with her uncle, Medialuna, affect her actions and aspirations throughout the film?
- > How does the community respond to Laureana's idea, and what does this reveal about the village's sense of unity or division?
- > What obstacles do the characters face in their quest to watch the boxing match, and how do they overcome them?
- > How are themes of visibility and recognition explored in the story, especially regarding the village's place in the world?
- > What role does Efraín, the former boxing coach, play in the narrative, and how does his past with Medialuna impact the present?
- > In what ways does the final outcome of the boxing match affect the villagers and their sense of identity or hope?
- > How does the film use the collective journey to access the boxing match as a metaphor for larger struggles faced by marginalized communities?
- > What do you think of the ending?
How does it make you feel about Laureana's future?



CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES

- > Paolo Kagaoan, film critic, wrote: "In *La Suprema*, the cinematography is vibrant. The three main actors are natural storytellers. Viewers can tell the bond that they have every time they're on screen. This is a film about Afrolatinos giving themselves another look, either through the mirror or a television that, in this case, they install in their shared village plaza."
- > What do you think of that statement?
- > What do you think of the film in terms of acting?
- > How does the cinematography capture the isolation and remoteness of *La Suprema*'s setting? What visual techniques help convey the village's atmosphere?
- > In what ways does the use of natural lighting or color palette contribute to the film's sense of realism and authenticity?
- > How are camera angles and shot compositions used to emphasize Laureana's perspective and emotional journey?
- > What role do long shots or wide shots play in showing the relationship between characters and their environment?
- > Can you identify any recurring visual motifs or symbols in the film's imagery? How do these contribute to the overall narrative or themes?



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CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES *continued*

- > Can you identify any recurring visual motifs or symbols in the film's imagery? How do these contribute to the overall narrative or themes?
- > How does the movement of the camera (such as tracking shots or handheld sequences) influence the pacing and energy of certain scenes?
- > What information about the characters or their circumstances is revealed through *mise-en-scène**—the arrangement of people and objects within the frame?
- > How does the cinematography help build tension or anticipation, especially leading up to the boxing match broadcast?
- > In what ways does the visual style of the film reinforce its central themes of invisibility, resilience, or community?

THEMES

- > What do you think is the central meaning of *La Suprema*?
- > How would you describe the tone of the film?
- > How does the film explore the concept of visibility for marginalized communities, and why is being “seen” so important for the villagers of La Suprema?
- > In what ways does *La Suprema* address the theme of collective action and community solidarity? Can you identify moments where unity is tested or strengthened?
- > How does the struggle to bring electricity and television to the village symbolize larger issues of access and inclusion in society?
- > What does the film suggest about the power of dreams and aspirations in the face of adversity? How do these ambitions affect both individuals and the community as a whole?
- > How are themes of gender and generational expectations depicted through Laureana's journey and her interactions with others?
- > In what ways does the narrative highlight the tension between preserving tradition and embracing change? How do different characters respond to this tension?
- > How does the film use the boxing match as a metaphor for the fight against marginalization and invisibility?
- > What role does hope play in the story, and how is it sustained or challenged by the characters' circumstances?
- > How does *La Suprema* portray dignity and pride within the community, especially in the face of external neglect or internal struggles?
- > What message does the film convey about the importance of belonging and identity, both for individuals and for the village as a whole?



* *Mise-en-scène* is a French term referring to the deliberate arrangement of everything that makes up the frame of shot. This includes everything from the lighting to the props used in order to carefully convey mood and meaning.

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