

WildHeart Vision presents

2012: THE BEGINNING

TECHNICAL INFO

52 minutes

Color

Stereo

Exhibition Format: HDCAM, DigiBeta NTSC & PAL

Production Format: HD

English, Spanish

Finland 2012

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

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PEOPLE ARE EXPECTING A CHANGE. SOME WITH FEAR,
SOME WITH ILLUSION, OTHERS WITH UNCERTAINTY.



{ AC TA'H }

DECEMBER 21, 2012. This date, identified by the Maya nearly 1,400 years ago, has in recent years become the source of great curiosity and debate. Some believe it will bring catastrophic events. Others, an era of enlightenment.

But what did the ancient Maya themselves believe? In *2012: The Beginning*, we travel the world to examine what the sacred Maya texts really say.

At the ruins of Copán, Honduras, we go where few individuals and even fewer cameras have gone: 20 meters underground, to the spectacularly preserved, 1,600-year-old Margarita Temple. In Dresden, Germany, we slip through a golden, hieroglyph-covered door and enter a darkened room containing some of the world's most significant books from four millennia—including the famed Dresden Codex, one of only three remaining authenticated manuscripts of the ancient Maya, and the earliest known book from the Americas. In Guatemala, the veil is lifted from the mysterious world of Maya shamanism. And in México, we examine the little-seen Tortuguero Monument 6, the only known inscription citing this much-storied date. What will we learn about the lost world of an ancient civilization? About the future of our own?

Throughout, our journey will be guided by noted archaeologists, scholars, and the living Maya, who will take us into the field—to the very origins of the Maya Long Count calendar—and into their lives and sacred ceremonies. Together, these people from very different worlds will shed light on a date that has long been shrouded in mystery and intrigue.

2012: THE BEGINNING DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My mother once told me that we don't always choose our paths, that sometimes they're chosen for us. At the time, I didn't believe her. "I make my own destiny," I said. But now, looking back to that fateful afternoon in 2003, I think she may have been right.

It was golden hour in Ixtapa, México, that magical time when the setting sun glints off the Pacific and everything is aglow. I was making my way back to my resort, following a winding path over which palms ducked in the breeze, tickling the flowering shrubs below.

He emerged not five feet before me: a massive black cat with a blockhead and a tail as thick as my arm. His eyes were a vivid yellow, and directed right at me.

At first, the cat was completely motionless, except for his tail, which curved slowly, like a charmed snake in an old black-and-white film. But after some time—how long, I don't know, as time seemed to stand still—he took a slow step toward me. I took a slow step toward him. We both paused, standing, staring. And then we continued on our journeys.

It didn't occur to me to be scared. That came afterward, when people in the village told me that it was a jaguar, and that they never came down as far as my resort. Some spoke with fear, others with reverence. A few touched my hands, and one even kissed me, whispering "jaguar, jaguar," over and over again like a mantra.

Their reaction was something I would only come to understand four-and-a-half years later, when I left behind everything I knew and moved from Wisconsin to a remote Maya Ch'orti' village in Honduras, the country whose name translates

literally to *the depths*. I had no way of knowing what awaited me in this strange land, or just how fitting it would prove to be.

I'd brought with me just one suitcase and three goals: to heal my heart, to reconnect with my spirituality, and to discover my higher purpose. What I got was so much more. It was here that I was recognized by shamans as being a "jaguar woman", one who can see in both the darkness and in the light. Who can walk in both the spirit and earth realms. A guardian of sorts. One who tells the stories.

I don't know if this is true, but what I do know is that I have an inexplicable connection to the Maya people and lands, and that I've been blessed to live and study with their spiritual leaders. To cook alongside their women. To participate in their sacred ceremonies. To be permitted access into their homes, their lives, and their ancestors' most

sacred temples and tombs. They even gave me a traditional Maya wedding when I was remarried there in 2010.

I can't say I know where my path is headed, or if its destination is chosen for or by me. All I know for sure is that I feel a great responsibility to share the teachings of this fascinating culture that is still very much alive.

The people, places, stories, rituals, and even animals of the Maya world, both past and present, have enriched my life and the world in which we all live in ways those of us in the Western culture are just beginning to understand.

2012: The Beginning is my humble contribution towards honoring this.

{ Shannon Kring Buset }



2012: THE BEGINNING DIRECTOR & PRODUCER BIOS

SHANNON KRING BUSET

Writer / Director / Producer



In 2008, Shannon Kring Buset left behind her career as the award-winning author of four books, executive producer and co-star of an Emmy-winning PBS reality-cooking series, and owner of acclaimed restaurants and culinary schools. She moved to a remote Maya Ch'orti' village on the Honduras-Guatemala border, bringing with her just one suitcase and three goals for inner achievement: to heal her heart, to reconnect with her spirituality, and to discover her higher purpose. She did just that. Today, Shannon is a frequent keynote speaker at events worldwide, and is finishing her first novel, also about the Maya. This is her first documentary film.

GABRIEL NOBLE

Producer



As a theater, documentary film, and television director and cinematographer, Gabriel is committed to using the visual arts to tell the stories of cultural phenomena, subcultures, and extraordinary youth. Upon graduating from UCLA, Gabriel moved to New York to direct off-Broadway theater, before shooting and directing his first documentary. Since then his documentaries have premiered on PBS, HBO, BBC, and MTV, and screened in festivals around the world. Recently he has used his documentary sensibility to shoot ad campaigns for Apple, Pearson Education, Pepsi, and Kraft.

“FOR US AT LEAST, THIS
RENEWAL DOES EXIST. WE
BEGIN AGAIN AND NEVER DIE.”

{ TATA JOSĒ SOG CHIVALĀN }

