

THE LAST MALE ON EARTH

At Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya, the Most Eligible Bachelor in the World has found his final resting place. After 42 years on this planet, the last male northern white rhinoceros, Sudan, has passed away. **THE LAST MALE ON EARTH** portrays the gentle giant's last months.

Once the rhinos' best means of defence, his horn has become its worst enemy. The high profit margins it brings to poachers have led to the decimation of the species. In an effort to protect Sudan from its persecutors, he was tended to by rangers and armed bodyguards. Facing the demise of even the last of the whole species, scientists are determined to find a way to reproduce them. Sudan's genetic material provides hope for future attempts, with the last remaining two females living on borrowed time.

Ever since Sudan was the only male northern white rhino still alive, he became a celebrity, a magnet of the masses. Director Floor van der Meulen: *"Tourists are queuing to pet the semi-tame colossus in his dying days*

and take selfies with him. The notion that he is the very last one, is sort of appealing. It sounds horrible, but it somehow attracts us. That is the paradox of living in this modern era: if the caretakers didn't organise these 'endangered species tours', nobody would know about Sudan's story."

Both an explicit call to action and a compelling eulogy, **THE LAST MALE ON EARTH** is a distressing countdown to extinction. The film demonstrates the issue of the endangered subspecies with subtle irony. Floor van der Meulen's approach to the topic celebrates the dignity of the northern white rhino and the determination of his caretakers to uphold it. However, while revelling in the beauty of the majestic animal, van der Meulen does not fail to weave the undeniable and harsh truth of the human disregard for nature into the fabric of her narration. In what she describes as "a reflective documentary", van der Meulen balances the many parallel narratives of Sudan's last days, encouraging the audience to think beyond the intriguing images onscreen.



"The film explores how we as humans deal with the situation in all its different aspects. It is a film about a rhino indeed, but in its mirroring of the human behaviour, it says more about the human species and how we nowadays treat the earth, the animals and the environment."

Director: Floor van der Meulen; producer: Hasse van Nunen, Renko Douze; co-produced by: Emmy Oost, Samuel Feller. World sales: CAT&Docs, contact: www.eenvandejongens.com. The Netherlands, 72'.

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The 18th doxs!-festival will take place from 4-10 November 2019 in Duisburg and other cities in the Ruhr Area. **THE LAST MALE ON EARTH** has been selected as the opening film of this year's festival edition.

