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Magaluf Ghost Town: Alienation, realism, and magic through film in tourism hotspots

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Abstract

The daily experiences of local populations in tourism hotspots are increasingly characterized by feelings of alienation, resulting in polarized and sometimes ambiguous attitudes toward the tourism industry within these communities. In that context, this article explores, using an ecocritical and new materialist lens, how *Magaluf Ghost Town* (Miguel Ángel Blanca, 2020) creates an alternative affective image of the Spanish town of Magaluf. Blanca's film, a hybrid of fiction and non-fiction, follows the lives of real individuals residing in this resort and offers an ironic critique of some consequences of mass tourism and gentrification. Through close reading and audiovisual analysis of selected sequences, the study concludes that this innovative and daring portrayal of Magaluf can reaffirm the local identity through its detailed depiction of various characters that depend on tourism. At the same time, the prestige associated with a more authorial rather than commercial perspective entails the possibility of shaping new mystifications that the tourism industry could incorporate to support a rebranding of Magaluf. The findings point to new grounds in the fertile intersection between film studies and tourism studies when approached from ecocritical perspectives.

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1. Introduction

Anti-tourism discourse has gained prominence in Spain in recent years, reaching new heights in 2024 with numerous demonstrations across various regions of the country.¹ The surge in visitor numbers, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, has been accompanied by negative consequences, including increased pressure on the real estate market and deterioration of social cohesion. These issues have been increasingly highlighted and condemned by residents, especially in a country that ranks among the world's leading tourism destinations. The primary centers of these protests have been two of the most popular cities on the Iberian Peninsula, Barcelona, and Málaga, as well as the two Spanish archipelagos, the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands.

It is perhaps here, later, where the impacts of a sector currently experiencing a challenging phase in its relationship with the native Spanish populations are most perceptible and extreme. One example is Mallorca, the most visited of the Balearic Islands, frequently cited as a paradigmatic case of overtourism. In recent years, a substantial body of academic literature has examined this term, with several studies specifically addressing its manifestation in the context of the Balearic Islands.

The World Tourism Organization defines overtourism as the impact that tourism has on a destination, or parts of it, through its strong negative influence on the perceived quality of life of citizens and/or the quality of visitor experiences.² While the most commonly used indicator for assessing this negative impact is the excessive influx of tourists, a systematic review of the existing academic literature³ highlights that the issue extends beyond mere visitor numbers. Tourist behavior also plays a crucial role, and overtourism should be understood as a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by economic, demographic, cultural, and environmental dimensions. These factors must be interpreted in light of residents' perceptions.

Moreover, several scholars have argued that overtourism is fundamentally a locally determined phenomenon, implying that its definition and measurement may vary according to specific contextual factors.³ The precision of the term's definition is crucial, as there is a risk that excessive or indiscriminate use may lead to its trivialization.⁴

In the case of Mallorca, survey-based analyses have concluded that "overtourism can be defined as seasonal excess visitor numbers, with tourists spreading into places formerly reserved for local residents, contributing to overpopulation, a declining quality of life, and overstrained ecological resilience."^{3(p.20)} Newspaper analysis has further revealed that this excess in sheer visitor volume is a prominent issue on the Balearic public agenda, particularly regarding its impact on the local population.⁵ Even tourists themselves associate overtourism with processes of transformation and commodification (viz., touristification), which result in a diminished perception of authenticity.⁶

Over the past decade, several documentaries, such as Álex Dioscorides' *Overbooking*,⁷ have highlighted the social and environmental unsustainability of the traditional tourist model in Mallorca, an issue that is increasingly influencing its public policies. The most apparent and seemingly feasible solution, which the sector appears to be moving toward, is to limit the number of visitors and shift focus toward more exclusive forms of tourism.

Miguel Ángel Blanca's film *Magaluf Ghost Town*,⁸ a hybrid of documentary and fiction centered on Magaluf

(one of Mallorca's most popular coastal resorts renowned for its vibrant nightlife and its reception of predominantly British visitors, many from the working classes), captures the underlying tensions between locals and tourists, as well as the ongoing processes of transformation driven by the interests of the real estate sector. Despite its unquestionable critical vision, the film also adheres to a renewed interest in defending, in unorthodox ways, the freedom and creativity present in certain types of vacations that are generally vilified. This has already been explored in other artistic and academic projects related to Magaluf⁹ that consider its nightlife a struggle "between self-identity and a desire to be part of a mass,"^{10(p.425)} and deserves close attention in other contexts (such as Benidorm) when analyzed from a class perspective.¹¹ Blanca's project was praised by critics for successfully combining radicalism with a popular and accessible tone¹² and has previously been analyzed from various academic perspectives, including its links with the macabre¹³ and the relationship between tourists and the extraordinary/intra-ordinary.¹⁴ The latter line of inquiry aligns with the trend in tourism studies to note the increasingly blurred boundaries of tourist activities, considering them as part of the broader spectrum of human mobilities.^{15,16}

This article aims to demonstrate that the complex array of people, institutions, capital, social media, etc., represented in Blanca's film leads to a portrayal of the contradictory reality and carnivalesque character of Magaluf that resonates with the actor-network (ANT) theory as well as with the recent critical praise for an ecocinema. It will be argued that these theoretical perspectives share common points that can help to consider how alternative representations of tourist destinations may establish new emotional connections between these destinations and both locals and visitors.

Methodologically, this article employs a qualitative approach grounded in close textual and audiovisual analysis of Miguel Ángel Blanca's film *Magaluf Ghost Town*. Special attention is devoted to key sequences, including the construction of a scale model, representations of nightlife and social media use, the so-called "danger unit," and various spectral scenes, which are analyzed for their thematic and esthetic significance. This single-case study seeks to demonstrate how the film mobilizes material dimensions to reframe the cultural and spatial imaginary of Magaluf.

Section 2 outlines the theoretical framework, focusing on how ecocriticism and new materialism are increasingly informing both tourism and film studies. It introduces key conceptual tools that will be applied in the subsequent analysis. Section 3 engages with *Magaluf Ghost Town* in

detail, identifying sequences and narrative elements that are particularly resonant with the theoretical premises laid out earlier. Section 4 brings these discussions into dialogue, exploring the analytical insights that emerge from the intersection of theory and filmic text. Finally, the conclusion synthesizes the main findings and proposes future lines of inquiry.

2. Theoretical frame: Ecocriticism and new materialism in relation to tourism and media

As Donna Haraway states, cinema can serve to construct “new stories (and theories) that are just big enough to gather up the complexities and keep the edges open and greedy for surprising new and old connections.”^{17(p.160))} This idea largely underpins the foundation of ecocriticism applied to audiovisual media. The primary objective of this theoretical approach is not merely to problematize certain representations of the environment in mainstream audiovisual productions or to identify the most environmentally harmful practices within the film industry. Rather, it aspires to a more ambitious goal: to uncover new strategies that facilitate the articulation of alternative audiovisual representations, thereby expanding the mental frameworks through which audiences engage with environmental issues and relate to the natural world. Scholars such as MacDonald have emphasized the importance of experimental and avant-garde films to accomplish this.¹⁸ In addition, the new proposals and discourses on the environment require a renewal of audiences’ attitudes and emotional responses in relation to what is depicted on the screen.

The necessity for new narratives and a critical examination of our relationship with the environment has become increasingly apparent on a planet currently facing a climate crisis. Despite this, certain imaginaries rooted in extractivist, consumerist, and predatory paradigms persist and exert significant influence. For instance, within the realm of tourism, there exists a longstanding tradition of analyzing tourism imaginaries through an ecocritical lens. In recent years, this approach has been exemplified in scholarly works exploring the relationship between tourism and the Anthropocene.¹⁹

The question should not only focus on the characteristics of these tourism imaginaries but also on the alternatives being proposed to them. This is the approach taken by Rust, Monani, and Cubitt in their 2023 update of their seminal work on ecocinema.²⁰ In an ecocritical context, it is additionally essential to analyze not only the imaginaries and discourses but also the circumstances and material conditions under which these representations are produced, as the authors affirm:

Cinema has become unthinkable apart from its dependence on mining, electricity generation, and fabrication with their attendant pollution, on global logistical operations and supply chains with massive ecological footprints, on material and technical infrastructures with direct consequences in the physical world, and on the problem of waste.^{21(p.1)}

However, it is undeniable that the intricate infrastructure of the audiovisual industry also influences emotions. For this reason, ecocriticism advocates for the examination of the interconnectedness between human and non-human elements and agents in the pursuit of a comprehensive understanding of cinema:

Ontologically, it is clear that such as human beings, media technologies, and screenings are only thinkable as permeable congregations of materials and energies suffused by flows and affects coursing through the wider world as cells and neurons, chips, and datastreams.^{21(p.2)}

This approach to film studies shows notable parallels with contemporary trends in tourism studies, particularly the ANT. In a comprehensive literature review of developments in tourism studies during the 21st century, Cohen and Cohen²² identified ANT, performativity, and the mobilities paradigm as the most significant theoretical frameworks currently shaping the field.

Building on the concept of performativity, tourism studies have long posited that there is no fundamental essence that renders a destination inherently interesting; rather, it is the repetition of specific actions that constructs the notion of “authenticity” surrounding a tourist attraction, since it is possible to talk about constructive and existential authenticity, besides the objective one.²³ In particular, the way tourists behave is an important reference in shaping tourist spaces, and this is why some of the most relevant authors in tourism studies have defended that places should be seen as dynamic, in constant movement.²⁴ More recently, ANT has highlighted the importance of identifying the agents involved in these performances and understanding that a complex network of phenomena is often woven between human and non-human actors. This perspective recognizes that not only tourists are engaged in creating a tourist hotspot, but also residents, institutions, and communities. In addition, non-human entities are involved too, such as machines—for example, the role played by social media algorithms—and ecosystems, including fauna and flora.

This development has resulted in a renewed emphasis on the significance of materiality, extending beyond purely discursive considerations.²⁵ In recent years, for example, several studies within the field of tourism have examined

the material cultures associated with this sector.²⁶ Examples include analyses of the role of sand,²⁷ the significance of the bucket and spade,²⁸ and the relationship between souvenirs and wildlife,²⁹ among others.

Consequently, the integration of a novel concept of materialism represents perhaps the most compelling point of convergence between the advancements in audiovisual ecocriticism and tourism studies, following a wider trend in cultural studies.³⁰ One of the most influential scholars associated with the paradigm of new materialism is Karen Barad, who has challenged the notion that performativity should be primarily understood through language and discourse. Instead, she proposes a conception that transcends the relationship between objects and their representations, emphasizing the practices and transformative processes through which entities are constituted (elements that only occasionally involve discursive aspects). To summarize:

Matter refers to the materiality/materialization of phenomena (...). Matter and meaning are mutually articulated. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other.³¹ (p.207)

This approach can be easily related to the film that will focus our analysis: *Magaluf Ghost Town*. Applying ANT's new materialism makes it possible to trace the network of human and non-human actants in the film, from real estate investors to the digital platforms and ghostly presences. In addition, new materialism allows for interpreting a physical model as a performative object, emphasizing how matter and meaning co-constitute each other. Similarly, materialist ecocritical approaches inform the reading of camera work and rhythm, privileging vulnerability and relationality over spectacle.

3. Film analysis

Magaluf Ghost Town is an independent production by Boogaloo Films, Little Big Story, and Mosaic Producciones, shot in Mallorca by a small team right before the COVID-19 pandemic. As previously mentioned, it is not a conventional documentary but an experimental film that blurs the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction.

It is essential to consider the context in which the film was both shot and released. Filming took place in 2019, during the peak of Spain's tourism recovery following the 2008 financial crisis, while its release in 2021 coincided with a broader period of reflection on the future of tourism in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This temporal framing is particularly relevant, as some scholars have

argued that crises should not be seen merely as external disruptions to tourism, but rather as formative moments that shape the sector's trajectory.³²

From this perspective, it has been suggested that public-private intervention offered a potential response to the issue of hotel obsolescence identified decades ago. This approach took form through public policies such as the Horizon 2020 Plan and the provision of subsidized loans aimed at revitalizing tourism infrastructure.³² In the Balearic Islands, regulatory relaxation for tourism development was even more pronounced in the wake of the 2008 crisis. Concurrently, the municipality of Calvià, where Magaluf is located, initiated a rebranding process that has continued in recent years, culminating in the launch of the Calvià 365 tourism diversification project.³³

Magaluf Ghost Town follows several characters, all of whom are locals, and presents life in Magaluf from their perspective. Several elements within the film can be related to the theoretical framework outlined above. The relationship between tourism and the Anthropocene is illustrated through a model; the conflicts associated with tourism and their impact on local societies are depicted through the main characters; and, finally, the role of non-human actors is explored—from digital entities such as apps and social networks, to the presence of ghosts.

3.1. The agency behind the Anthropocene: Magaluf through a scale model

The film begins with a scene of a machine cutting pieces with lasers. A man then glues, paints, and sprays, creating a model of Magaluf. Off-screen, children sing a song in a haunting whisper; by the end of the film, it is revealed that this spectral soundtrack was a summer hit from decades past, "Come to Magaluf," performed by the band Los Brios.

This model symbolizes the concept of an environment in which human activity exerts a decisive influence. The detailed shots of the model serve as a leitmotif, recurring approximately every 10 min to mark different episodes within the film. In addition, the model is integrated into the diegesis: It is connected to Olga, the Russian real estate agent, who explains how international investors are speculating on land within the tourist area, aiming to replace working-class tourism with a more exclusive audience.

While other documentaries addressing tourism in Mallorca often utilize cartographic representations, *Magaluf Ghost Town* asserts its playful perspective from the outset by employing a model rather than a map. This choice underscores the film's emphasis on materiality and performativity, positioning the physicality of the environment at the core of its approach to the territory.

This model functions both as a tangible physical object and as a “discourse” about the city. While maps also embody these two aspects, the key difference lies in the model’s more intuitive engagement with the concept of agency. The person who constructs the model, whom we see on screen, assisted by machines and tools, embodies a form of agency that parallels the forces shaping the terrain, such as erosive actions by wind and sea, as well as the influence of human agents (for example, foreign investors, like Olga’s clients). This connection aligns the film with the broader idea of the Anthropocene. Furthermore, the visibility of the construction process of the model helps to mitigate the sense of objectivity and inevitability often conveyed by maps; it emphasizes the human intervention involved in shaping the environment, the notion of material agency.

To underscore the significance of the model, shots of it (sometimes detailed close-ups of specific elements such as coasts, swimming pools, or skyscrapers) are consistently juxtaposed with wide-angle shots of the corresponding real-world features. This editing choice emphasizes the correspondence between the model and its real-world counterparts. The ground-level shots are captured from the perspective of a concealed character, peering over a balcony, “peeking out and afraid of being discovered,” as the director describes.³⁴ This vantage point contrasts sharply with the drone shots frequently used in other documentaries on tourism’s effects, which seem to dominate the landscape, so the film’s alternative decision reminds on Rust, Monani and Cubitt’s idea that “the ecocritical lesson we should take from the recent history of technological development is to not just focus on what can now be included or enclosed by cinema but also on what has been further excluded and naturalized.”^{21(p.8)}

3.2. Characters and locals’ strategies facing tourism

The film presents, through its characters, a nuanced discourse on the inequalities associated with tourism and its impact on the local communities. Among the protagonists is Olga, a Russian real estate agent who, as previously mentioned, offers her clients investment opportunities in land, luxury villas, and similar ventures. In one scene, she visits Emilio, a representative of Magaluf’s small business owners. His restaurant/pub has been highly successful, yet it faces an uncertain future as a family enterprise due to his son Aarón’s lack of interest in continuing the business. Aarón is frequently accompanied by another teenager, Rubén, who embodies the aspirations and ambivalence of the younger generation. While he dreams of leaving the island in search of a more glamorous life than that of serving tourists, he also fantasizes about adopting the lifestyle of a permanent tourist himself.

Emilio’s establishment also employs Cheikne, a worker from Mali, who shares an apartment with Tere, a middle-aged waitress from Andalusia. Together, they represent Magaluf’s working class. Unlike the younger characters, their aspirations are more pragmatic: rather than seeking glamour, they strive to earn a living and avoid loneliness, all while navigating the risks posed by intoxicated tourists.

The characters in the film help establish its tone and drive several of the strategies through which the discourse on overtourism is rendered less solemn and, arguably, more effective. Examples include Tere’s use of humor and Rubén’s openly queer perspective. This relates to affective ecocinema: it is noteworthy that both humor and queerness have been identified by some scholars as strategies aligned with a form of “bad environmentalism,” one that deliberately avoids the solemnity and moralism often associated with traditional ecological discourses, thereby potentially increasing its effectiveness.³⁵

Regarding the film’s production practices, it is important to highlight that these characters portray themselves, operating within a performative documentary framework. The director has stated that casting was one of the most challenging aspects of the project.³⁴ Fictional elements are introduced only toward the end of the film. As Miguel Ángel Blanca explains, “the arc of the characters is closely linked to the very form of the documentary, which becomes rarified and filled with fiction.”³⁴ This hybrid creative process, situated between documentary and fiction, resonates with new materialist conceptions of matter as something constituted through the relationships it forms and the processes in which it participates.

3.3. Non-human agents: Ghosts and the digital world

This analysis highlights the role of non-human mediators, with particular emphasis on the digital realm and the supernatural. Regarding the digital world, mobile applications are presented as mediating tools that structure and give meaning to the characters’ experiences through performativity. The audience observes their use of social media and other apps. Tere manages a YouTube channel, Rubén showcases his Instagram profile, and Cheikne uses Google Maps to display his hometown. Several scenes depict the characters recording themselves and posing, followed by the presentation of these recordings within the respective app interfaces, illustrating both process and outcome, two sides of the same coin. These dynamic functions like a matryoshka doll: The characters perform for their social networks while simultaneously performing for the film itself.

A contrast emerges between the characters associated with the local workforce in Magaluf, who actively

engage with social media, and those aligned with capital investment, such as Olga, who rely more on traditional mass media characterized by a top-down communication model. A comprehensive analysis of media presence in the film must also be considered: radio (notably, through an ironic mention of a “balconing” contest, a dangerous and sometimes fatal practice in Mallorca involving jumping from balconies into swimming pools), television reporters conducting eccentric street interviews, and the TV set where Olga is interviewed.

The director offered a reflection on his reasons for incorporating social media and mass media into the film that resonates with ANT and performativity theories on tourism:

We know the city through what we’ve seen in news broadcasts, which have helped construct a myth that may not be entirely real. That led us to consider shaping this legend by building a universe filled with new rituals and myths. At its core, Magaluf is a kind of film set where people create their own characters as an act of resistance to survive. That’s why legends, memories, and dreams are so important in constructing this new image.³⁴

In addition, several narrative threads in the film engage with the supernatural and the presence of ghosts. Tere’s ongoing relationship with her deceased husband, Rubén, and his friends’ fascination with creepypasta legends, and, notably, Rubén’s personification of Magaluf itself as a ghost. Magaluf has no voice of its own; it is revealed only through Rubén’s intuition. Yet, it emerges as a presence far more complex than any human character, an amalgamation of pleasure and cruelty, the human and the non-human.

The connection between phantasmagoria and tourism is particularly evident: Not only because Magaluf becomes a ghost town during the off-season, an aspect seemingly embedded in its very identity, but also due to the proximity to death that many visitors experience during their stay at the resort, often through drug use or high-risk behaviors such as “balconing.”

In relation to the film’s shooting practices, it is worth emphasizing the work of the so-called “danger unit,” as credited in the film. This group of operators functioned as covert camera crews, capturing footage of tourists engaging in sexual activity in public places, entering the most chaotic areas of Punta Ballena’s nightlife, and more. These scenes, some of the most documentary-like segments in the film, carry a notable degree of dark humor. For instance, the use of “The Waltz of the Flowers” by Pyotr Tchaikovsky (from *The Nutcracker*) accompanies nighttime footage of tourists having sex on the beach. Regarding the operation of this unit, the director remarked:

We managed to remain flexible enough to seize opportunities as they arose, something only possible with a small team. (...) This created a fertile ground where creativity thrived, and everyone had the chance to contribute. For instance, the sex scene filmed on the beach was shot by the editor because I was doing fieldwork elsewhere at the time. The fact that an editor feels empowered to pick up the camera and know that what they shoot might end up in the final film is something truly beautiful. It breaks away from the notion that only the director or the cinematographer holds creative authority. I am proud to be able to shoot in such a free and open way.³⁴

4. Discussion

Based on the analysis conducted, which highlighted several parallels with the theoretical framework previously outlined, a key question emerges: Do the film’s ambivalent discourses and original narrative strategies, as employed by Miguel Ángel Blanca, serve to construct a new affective image of Magaluf? Moreover, is this affective tone confined solely to interpretations by local audiences, or can it contribute to the current rebranding efforts of the coastal resort?

On the one hand, the film engages boldly with the concept of tourismphobia, presenting it without mitigation or apology. It incorporates this sentiment through a range of striking examples: From Tere’s fear, expressed through nightmares of the gruesome “balconing” accidents she is later tasked with cleaning up, to Rubén’s staging of a drunken tourist’s kidnapping, or Olga’s gentrification plan, which aims to “erase” working-class tourists and replace them with more profitable visitors. In this way, tourismphobia in the film is not treated as an abstract notion, but is instead anchored in specific discourses and tangible elements, such as the dark humor of a local radio program that keeps a running tally of tourists who have died while practicing “balconing.”

It is also worth noting that *Magaluf Ghost Town* deliberately avoids certain representational strategies that are commonly found in documentaries critical of tourism, and, paradoxically, also in promotional audiovisual materials. Techniques such as drone footage, slow motion, or time-lapse sequences that serve to spectacularize the negative effects of tourism are absent. Instead, aligning with ecocritical perspectives, the film proposes alternative visual strategies more akin to the esthetics of slow cinema than to promotional media: a relatively slow rhythm, attention to small details, and camera angles that do not dominate the landscape but rather approach it with unease and a sense of vulnerability.

In light of these observations, *Magaluf Ghost Town* may be regarded as a compelling example of an alternative

audiovisual approach to tourism critique, one that rejects the codes of spectacle and, in doing so, aligns itself with the ecocritical tradition. One might assume, then, that the film is primarily oriented toward local audiences, offering them a reflective and emotionally resonant representation. However, the film also constructs a new, fascinating image of Magaluf, one that could potentially appeal to new visitors. The resort is depicted as a space shaped by its own tourist mythology, where extremes (including life and death) exist side by side, and where everything seems possible. It is a place that welcomes excess and eccentricity. This reframing serves, in a sense, to dignify Magaluf: transforming it from a site perceived as “shabby” into one characterized by diversity, albeit a diversity threatened by gentrifying urban strategies.

In this way, the film articulates an ambivalent yet meaningful defense of working-class tourism, an appeal that could, under certain conditions, be incorporated into the locality’s rebranding strategies, provided these do not reduce Magaluf to an exclusive or elitist destination. *Magaluf Ghost Town* thus positions the city’s relationship with mass tourism as a defining feature of its identity, one that must be critically examined, but that also constitutes a key part of its unique appeal.

This gives rise to a paradox that critical discourses on tourism may themselves become commodified as attractions. Yet at the same time, the film offers an important counter-narrative. It dispels the elitism often present in anti-tourist rhetoric, particularly the idea that fewer, wealthier tourists are inherently preferable. Instead, it affirms a more inclusive vision rooted in the complex and plural realities of Magaluf’s off-season residents.

5. Conclusion

The film’s closing credits end with a note of gratitude: “To all the good people of Magaluf, to the love and hate we received, which confirm Magaluf as both the best and the worst place in the world at the same time.” The contradiction embedded in this statement, along with its reference to extremes, may serve to spark the viewer’s curiosity about the place portrayed. It is not unreasonable to suggest that such a phrase could align with a new branding strategy that Magaluf might choose to adopt. In the words of the director himself: “What fascinates me is tourism’s capacity to grow, reinvent itself, and generate new scenarios.”³⁴

This article has explored a suggestive and new affective image of Magaluf and its links with new materialism, considering both film studies and tourism studies perspectives with an ecocritical lens. However, it has been based on a single case study, the film *Magaluf Ghost Town*³⁶, which had a limited audience after its release. Thus,

future investigations should trace a more comprehensive catalog of contemporary audiovisuals (fiction, non-fiction, advertising, and more) on Mallorca as well as other destinations, to confirm or deny the singularity of this case and put it in a wider context of discourses on tourism.

Magaluf Ghost Town is a film that looks toward the future, and its images consistently carry the sense that something is about to happen, contrary to the approach of other documentaries that delve into the past of tourist hotspots through archival footage. Miguel Ángel Blanca’s project generates new tropes and narrative frameworks, yet in doing so, it also faces the challenge of acknowledging its potential contribution to the destination’s rebranding. After all, there is a long list of Spanish cultural forms that have served to shape new tourist attractions through an auto-ethnographic gaze that, in the first place, wanted to avoid tourist stereotypes or even wanted to criticize tourism itself.³⁷

Nevertheless, the film’s main strength lies in its close relationship with a diverse and active local population, which is portrayed as a protagonist rather than a passive backdrop. In addition, it strives to complexify the material reality of the destination by invoking a broad spectrum of non-human agents, such as the digital or the supernatural (including local legends). Furthermore, the film critically examines the homogeneity and erosion of local identity that could result from a complete transformation of Magaluf into a family-oriented destination. It also boldly explores the “dark side” of tourism, a perspective that resonates with locals and has been vividly highlighted by recent demonstrations against tourism in Spain.

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