

fashioned approach with the film earning an impressive \$4.6 million in 70 mm on those 100 screens but then a disappointing \$16.2 million in digital projection on 2,500 screens for the director's lowest wide-opening figure since "Jackie Brown" back in 1997.

Meanwhile "The Force Awakens" – made on film just like the original "Star Wars" of 1977 – continues to obliterate box-office records and is on course to become the most successful movie ever, with U.S. gross of \$750 million in its first three weeks of release.

But not everyone is convinced that film is making a comeback.

Norman Hollyn, director of film studies at USC's School of Cinematic Arts, said film costs too much to become a trend.

"I don't see this happening," he said. "It's too expensive."

High costs have been a major factor pushing filmmakers away from celluloid. In fact, an 11-minute film, shot on Kodak 35 mm, might cost up to \$8,000.

The price difference became especially apparent in 2002 when **George Lucas** shot "Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones" entirely in digital. He spent \$16,000 producing 220 hours of footage on digital tape. But if he had decided to shoot his movie on celluloid, by some estimates, the cost would have skyrocketed to \$1.8 million.

As the demand for celluloid dropped, **Kodak Easton Co.**, a major film developer and manufacturer, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy after its revenue plunged 27 percent from \$1.3 billion to \$965 million in the first quarter of 2012.

Film developing labs also suffered.

In 2013, French-owned **Technicolor Inc.** closed its film lab in Glendale after the company lost its contract with **Universal Studios**.

A year later, **Deluxe Laboratory**, another major motion picture film-processing and printing facility, closed its doors due to "significant financial losses," it said at the time. The last film lab in New York rolled up production and discarded all equipment in 2014.

'Film is cheaper'

Still, some directors, including Chazelle, argue that film can be economically viable if used properly.

He decided to shoot "La La Land," which stars **Ryan Gosling** and **Emma Stone** as a musician and an actress falling in love, on film, unexpectedly enough, to save money.

"To make the film look as good as it looks, it would be more expensive on digital," Chazelle said. "We would need to have a different camera and do tons of postproduction work."

Chazelle said digital video proponents ignore the hidden costs, which emerge in postproduction such as data storage, coloring and logging.

While shooting on digital, filmmakers allow their cameras to run on and on because they think it's free, but the lengthy footage turns into additional expenses later.

To ax costs, Chazelle and his team decided to simply shoot less.

"We didn't have a tremendous amount of film," said Chazelle, whose film will be released in July by Santa Monica's **Lions Gate Entertainment Co.** "A lot of help comes from how much footage you need to do, how many stocks you need to buy. If you keep those economical, then the added cost is really low."

Student filmmaker Moldavskiy came up with a different solution to keep costs low – he shops at stores that sell leftover film from big production studios for half-price.

Despite the naysayers, film most definitely hasn't gone extinct.

Last year, Kodak, seeking to bounce back from bankruptcy, renewed its efforts to boost sales. Now the company's chief executive, **Jeff Clarke**, said his company will see profits this year. And six Hollywood studios, including **Walt Disney Co.**, **Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.** and **Sony Pictures**

Entertainment Inc. hammered out a deal with Kodak promising to keep buying film stocks.

It all means a lot of orders for labs such as Pro8mm. Rhonda Vigeant and her team there have been slammed with work since October with orders coming from as far as the East Coast.

"We're busy all day," Vigeant said. "Filmmakers are excited about film again. So maybe it isn't dead."

This year, it appears orders will keep coming.

Several Hollywood blockbusters shot on Kodak film will be released this year, including "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice," from **Zack Snyder**; the Coen brothers' "Hail, Caesar!"; and "Suicide Squad," from **David Ayer**.

Chazelle said he will be happy as long as filmmakers can choose from both options, digital and film.

"It's not that film supporters are advocating the death of the digital," he said. "The more options we have, the more colors of paint we have, the better."



In Development: Staffer at Pro8mm processes some film.

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ROB BELLO

General Counsel, Hughes Marino, Inc.

West Los Angeles

11150 Santa Monica Blvd.
Suite 1055
Los Angeles, CA 90025
tel: (310) 277-3211
www.hughesmarino.com

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