



Press Release

Berlinale *Retrospective* 2015:

“Glorious Technicolor. From George Eastman House and Beyond”

The *Retrospective* of the 65th Berlin International Film Festival promises to be an opulent colour spectacle. It will celebrate the 100th anniversary of a colour film process that has become a legend far beyond Hollywood: Color by Technicolor. The *Retrospective* will present around 30 magnificent Technicolor films, some of which have been elaborately restored. They were made in the early years between the dawn of Technicolor and 1953 - and include six British films.

“The blazing red of Southern skies in *Gone with the Wind* or the ecstatic yellow of the raincoats in *Singin’ in the Rain* - in those days, the play of dramatically intensified colours was a sensation. The Technicolor process combined with cultural and economic trends to produce great cinematic works of art that still thrill audiences today,” says Berlinale Director Dieter Kosslick.

As of 1915, inventors Herbert T. Kalmus, Daniel Comstock and W. Burton Wescott developed the two-colour process Technicolor No. I at the company they had founded for this purpose: Technicolor Motion Picture Corporation. This system used a beam splitter, and red and green filters to record and project the film. However, the spectrum of colours that could be reproduced on the screen in this process was still limited.

Viewers and film critics responded with some reserve to these first films and the flickering fringes of the colours. Though it was the scepticism of cinema operators, coupled with their own high standards, that repeatedly motivated Kalmus and his team to make ever new improvements over the next years and decades. With Technicolor No. IV, in which the three colours green, red and blue were used as of 1932, a level of quality was achieved that gave Technicolor its brilliancy. For the first time the whole colour spectrum could be reproduced. Technicolor No. V, introduced in 1952, was just a process for printing film, not for shooting it.

Technicolor was never connected to one single style even if, in comparison to the transparency of other colour film processes, it had a rather saturated look. Instead it aimed at making the use of colour more conscious and deliberate. Technicolor came into its own especially in (melo-)dramas, musicals and adventure films.

In Richard Boleslawski’s drama *The Garden of Allah* (USA 1936), the empty expanses of the desert, that appear in warm shades of red and brown, become landscapes of the soul. In George Sidney’s adventure film *The Three Musketeers* (USA 1948), dashing young men battle in dazzling pink and light blue in an entirely stylised and artificial setting.

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A true box-office hit was the MGM musical *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, USA 1939), which competed with the Technicolor films of Walt Disney Productions. In *The Wizard of Oz*, colour was used so excessively that the actors in their imaginative costumes look almost like in a cartoon. And in Howard Hawks' *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (USA 1953), Marilyn Monroe is clad in an irresistible pink set against a rich red backdrop when she sings "Diamonds are a girl's best friend".

Stunning panoramas characterise Westerns in Technicolor. In King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (USA 1946), hate and love are acted out under the scorching orange-red desert sun. In John Ford's *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (USA 1949), Monument Valley and its earthy tones serve as a picturesque backdrop that sets off the resplendent uniforms and details on the costumes.

Ultimately, in 1953, Technicolor's rival - colour negative film - started booming. Today it is important to get as close to the original of these splendid Technicolor films as possible. "Thanks to the cooperation with George Eastman House in Rochester, we will be able to present prints from one of the world's largest and best preserved collections of Technicolor films - and they will range from original prints to modern colour film prints. Thanks to the support of other film archives and studios, we will also be showing a large number of restored versions," comments Rainer Rother, Head of the *Retrospective* and Artistic Director of the Deutsche Kinemathek.

For the *Retrospective*, Bertz + Fischer Verlag is publishing a richly illustrated book, "Glorious Technicolor". In essays, renowned authors - including Scott Higgins, Barbara Flückiger and Susanne Marschall - will explore in depth the multi-faceted, and hitherto partly disregarded, phenomenon of Technicolor for the first time in German.

The *Retrospective's* film programme will be supplemented by events at the Deutsche Kinemathek. George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, had the idea for the topic of the upcoming *Retrospective*. It was then developed in partnership with the Deutsche Kinemathek, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Austrian Film Museum. Thanks to this cooperation, the film series will also be presented in Vienna (April 2015) and New York (summer 2015).

For the second year running, the *Retrospective* and *Homage* will be supported by their section partner, Glashütte Original, a watch manufacturer rich in tradition and co-partner of the Berlinale since 2011.

Press Office
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