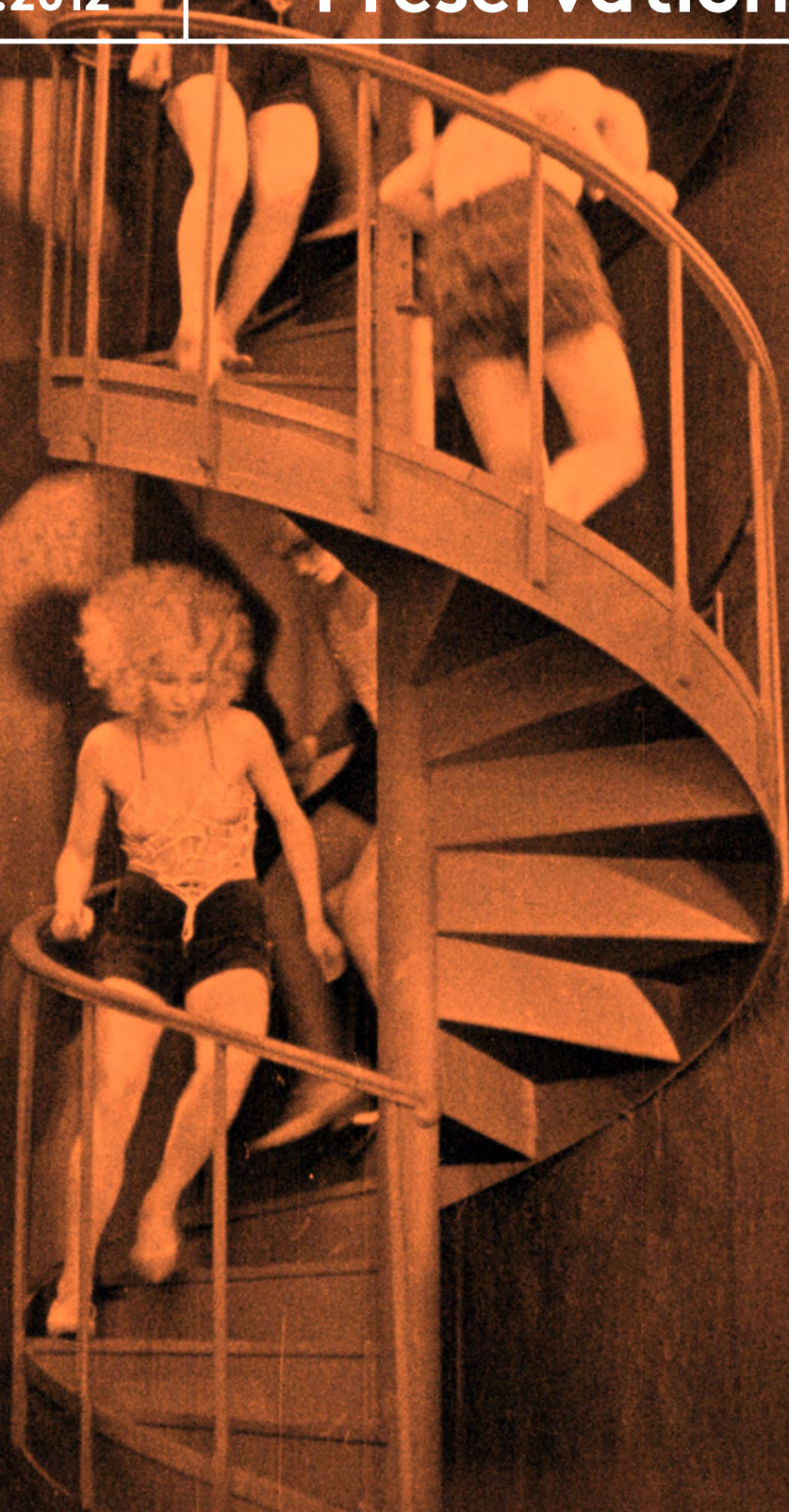


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# Journal of Film Preservation



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## FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES ARCHIVES DU FILM – FIAF

Rue Defacqz 1  
1000 Bruxelles/Brussels  
Belgique/Belgium  
T: +32 2 538 3065  
F: +32 2 534 4774  
info@fiafnet.org  
www.fiafnet.org

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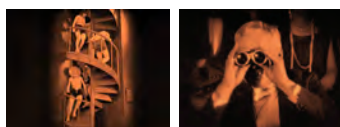
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Editorial enquiries and proposals for articles: [jfp.editor@fiafnet.org](mailto:jfp.editor@fiafnet.org)



Front and back covers:  
Frames from the restored version of  
*The Pleasure Garden* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1925)

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FIAF BOOKSHOP



# Editorial

Catherine A. Surowiec

Our front cover presents chorus girls descending a possibly Freudian staircase in Hitchcock's 1925 film *The Pleasure Garden*, while on the back, a *habitué* of the Pleasure Garden Theatre peers with delight through binoculars at the spectacle before him. We hope there is equally enough in the present issue of the *JFP* to capture the reader's attention. Hitchcock himself looms into view in an article about the BFI's work preparing restorations of his first nine surviving films, work that included the correct positioning of a close-up of a cup of tea. (Only in a British film, perhaps, would a teacup receive so much loving attention!) Other archival work across the world is surveyed in accounts from Barcelona (host of next year's FIAF Congress, with a preview of their new premises) and São Paulo (a report on their important Glauber Rocha collection, containing extensive paper documentation). We also pursue an Irish theme: an Irish website, Irish Film and TV Research Online, is explained and explored in one of three articles on Irish cinema, including a book and a DVD review.

Eileen Bowser writes enthusiastically about a fruitful silent comedy identification workshop held in America at the Library of Congress's Culpeper facility. Marco de Blois assesses the "Animation Around the World" symposium held at this year's FIAF Congress in Beijing. From the Netherlands, Ivo Blom writes in detail about the Desmet Collection's eventful path to international recognition and glory, in a text omitted for space reasons from his book *Jean Desmet and the Early Dutch Film Trade*, while Bregt Lameris traces the history of film preservation at the Netherlands Filmmuseum. Continuing the saga of Gance's *Napoléon* chronicled in our last issue, Rob Byrne writes from San Francisco about an event that had the packed audience in cheers and tears – the first presentation in America of Kevin Brownlow's full epic restoration, with Carl Davis's orchestral score. FIAF's School on Wheels in Kenya is documented, as is the heritage of Belgian colonial cinema and an ambitious project to disseminate surviving films in the countries of central Africa. The directorial career of actress Ida Lupino is remembered in a book review, while an important British television documentarian, Molly Dineen, is brought before us. We even explore New York's fabled Bowery, courtesy of a DVD review of Lionel Rogosin's 1956 documentary.

Quite a global tour. But as we all know, the cinematic imagination transcends earthly bounds. Last year Scorsese's *Hugo* brought Méliès the Magician of Montreuil back to life for the digital generation of *The Artist*, while coincidentally Neil Armstrong, earth's first man on the moon, joined the immortals as this issue was being prepared. It is therefore fitting then that our Open Forum section presents an important, and passionate, exchange of views on one of the most talked-about restorations of recent years, Lobster Films' presentation of Méliès' *Le Voyage dans la Lune*. Roland Cosandey and Jacques Malthête criticize and question its validity; Lobster's Serge Bromberg steps up for the defence; and Béatrice de Pastre of the CNC presents an archival perspective. It's a provocative debate for our times, which will surely continue. From the earth to the moon. A pleasure garden indeed.

En couverture de ce numéro, des danseuses descendent un escalier (peut-être freudien ?!) dans le film *The Pleasure Garden* d'Alfred Hitchcock (1925), alors que sur la troisième de couverture un habitué du Pleasure Garden Theatre se délecte à scruter ce même spectacle à travers ses jumelles. Nous espérons qu'il y a dans ce numéro du JFP autant de sujets susceptibles de capter l'attention de notre lecteur. Hitchcock lui-même y fait une apparition, par l'intermédiaire d'un article sur les travaux de restauration du BFI sur ses neuf premiers films ayant survécu. Des travaux qui ont inclus, comme vous pourriez le lire, le positionnement correct d'un gros plan d'une tasse de thé (seul un film britannique pouvait s'intéresser autant à une tasse de thé...). Les activités d'autres archives sont également passées au crible, au gré d'articles nous parvenant notamment de Barcelone (prochains hôtes du congrès de la FIAF, qui nous présentent leurs nouveaux locaux) et de São Paulo (un rapport sur leur importante collection de documents personnels de Glauber Rocha). L'Irlande est aussi présente à travers trois articles explorant ce cinéma national via la présentation d'Irish Film and TV Research Online (un site internet), et les critiques d'un livre et d'un DVD.

Eileen Bowser rend compte avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme d'un atelier d'identification de comédies muettes qui s'est tenu aux États-Unis, dans les locaux de la Library of Congress à Culpeper. Marco de Blois revient quant à lui sur le symposium "L'Animation à travers le monde" qui s'est déroulé à Pékin lors du dernier congrès de la FIAF. Depuis les Pays-Bas, Ivo Blom décrit de façon très détaillée le chemin parcouru par la collection Jean Desmet vers la reconnaissance internationale, dans un texte omis pour des raisons d'espace de son livre *Jean Desmet and the Early Dutch Film Trade*, alors que Bregt Lameris retrace l'histoire de la conservation des films au Nederlands Filmmuseum. En écho à la saga du *Napoléon* de Gance chroniquée dans le dernier numéro, Rob Byrne écrit de San Francisco pour nous faire part d'un événement – la première projection aux États-Unis de la plus complète version restaurée de Kevin Bronwlow, accompagnée par la musique de Carl Davis – qui a provoqué les acclamations (et les larmes) d'un public venu nombreux. Le lecteur pourra également lire un rapport sur la récente "School on Wheels" de la FIAF qui s'est tenue au Kenya, ainsi qu'une étude sur l'héritage du cinéma colonial belge et sur un projet ambitieux de diffuser dans les pays d'Afrique centrale les films qui ont survécu. Une critique de livre nous donne l'occasion de nous remémorer la carrière de cinéaste de l'actrice Ida Lupino; ailleurs, nous découvrons l'importante cinéaste documentaire britannique Molly Dineen. Enfin nous explorons le quartier de Bowery à New York, via une critique du DVD du fameux documentaire de Rogosin (1956).

En somme, ce numéro du JFP fait le tour du monde. Mais comme nous le savons tous, l'imagination cinématographique transcende les limites terrestres. L'année dernière le *Hugo* de Scorsese a redonné vie à Méliès, le magicien de Montreuil, pour la génération numérique de *The Artist*. Il y a quelques semaines Neil Armstrong, le premier terrien qui ait marché sur la Lune, a rejoint les immortels alors que nous achevions ce numéro. Il nous semble donc approprié que la section de notre « Open Forum » présente un échange de vues crucial et passionné sur l'unes des restaurations qui a le plus fait parler d'elle ces dernières années: *Le Voyage dans la Lune* de Méliès, version Lobster Films. Roland Cosandey et Jacques Malthête la critiquent et mettent même en cause sa validité; Serge Bromberg de Lobster, monte au créneau pour la défendre; enfin, Béatrice de Pastre du CNC présente le point de vue archivistique. Le résultat est un débat provocateur et stimulant pour notre époque, et qui va sans nul doute se poursuivre. De la terre à la Lune. En bref, un vrai « jardin des délices » (pleasure garden)!

En la portada de este número, pueden admirar una escena de *The Pleasure Garden* de Hitchcock (1925) unas bailarinas bajando una escalera (tal vez un símbolo freudiano) y, en la contraportada interior, otra escena en la que un habitado del lugar disfruta del espectáculo con sus prismáticos. Esperamos provocar tanto deleite e interés con esta edición del JFP. Hitchcock aparece aquí con un artículo dedicado al trabajo preparativo para la restauración de nueve de sus primeras películas en el BFI; trabajos que incluyeron el buen posicionamiento de una taza de té (película británica tenía que ser). Otros archivos nos congratulan con artículos sobre su actualidad como es el caso de Barcelona (los anfitriones de la próxima edición del Congreso de la FIAF nos complacen con una visita de sus nuevas instalaciones) y de São Paulo (un reportaje sobre la importante colección de documentos auténticos de Glauber Rocha detenida por la Cinemateca brasileira). Irlanda también está presente a través de tres artículos; hablaremos de la nueva página web "Irish Film and TV Research Online", de un libro y de un DVD.

En Estados Unidos Eileen Bowser transmite el entusiasmo general que hubo durante los talleres de autenticación de comedias mudas organizados en los locales de la Library of Congress, en Culpeper (Virginia). Marco de Blois vuelve a hablar del Simposio "La Animación a través del mundo" del último Congreso de la FIAF en Pekín. Desde los Países Bajos, Ivo Blom describe de manera detallada el recorrido de Jean Desmet hacia el reconocimiento internacional mientras en su libro *Jean Desmet and the early Dutch Film Trade*, mientras Bregt Lameris narra la historia de la conservación de las películas en el Nederlands Filmmuseum.

Un eco a la saga del *Napoléon* de Gance, cuya crónica aparecía en el último número, nos llega de San Francisco. Rob Byrne relata la fuerte emoción (aplausos y hasta lágrimas incluidos) que ha suscitado la proyección de la versión restaurada de Kevin Bronwlow - acompañada con la música de Carl Davis -. Sin duda la restauración más exacta hasta la fecha.

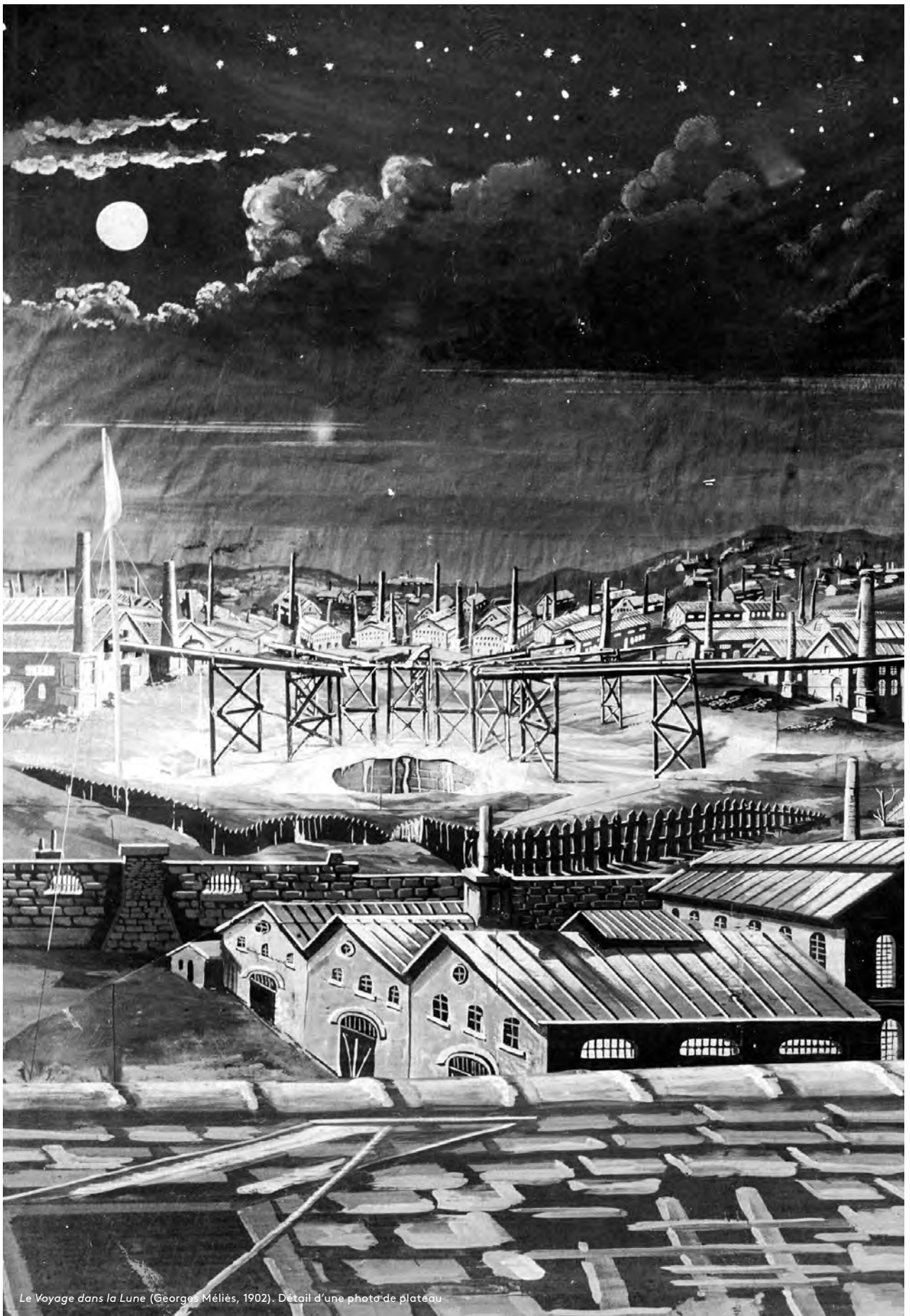
Nuestros lectores podrán leer también el informe sobre la reciente "School on Wheels" de la FIAF que se mantuvo en Kenia asimismo como un estudio sobre la herencia del cine colonial belga y el proyecto ambicioso de difundir las películas que sobrevivieron en distintos países del África central. Una crítica de libro nos da la ocasión de conmemorar la carrera de cineasta de la actriz Ida Lupino. Luego, descubriremos la importante obra de la documentalista británica Molly Dineen. Y, al final, exploraremos el barrio de Bowery en Nueva York con la crítica de la edición en DVD del famoso documental de Rogosin (1956).

Con certeza podemos decir que esta edición da la vuelta al mundo, aunque ya sabemos que la imaginación cinematográfica trasciende las fronteras terrestres. El año pasado, Scorsese dio una nueva vida a Méliès con *Hugo* un legado para esta generación digital de *The Artist*. Hace tan solo unas semanas, Neil Armstrong, primer humano en haber pisado la luna se juntó a los inmortales mientras acabábamos este número, Nos parece, pues, apropiado comentar y debatir sobre una de las restauraciones más polémicas de estos últimos años: *Le Voyage dans la Lune* de Méliès, versión Lobster Films. A eso viene dedicado la sección "Open Forum" de este número. Por un lado, Roland Cosandey y Jacques Malthête vienen criticando esta restauración y ponen su validez en duda; Serge Bromberg de Lobster Films se defiende y Béatrice Pastre del CNC presenta su opinión desde un punto de vista archivístico. Un debate que no está por terminar. De la tierra a la luna, ¡un verdadero "jardín de delicias" (pleasure garden)!

# Open Forum



« Le Voyage dans la Lune. En plein dans l'oeil!! » (9<sup>ème</sup> tableau). Dessin sur papier de Georges Méliès, c. 1930 (détail)



Le Voyage dans la Lune (Georges Méliès, 1902). Détail d'une photo de plateau



# Le Voyage dans la Lune (Lobster Films / Georges Méliès, 2011) : Ce que restaurer veut dire

Roland Cosandey & Jacques Malthête

**Roland Cosandey:** Historien du cinéma, membre de l'association Domitor, professeur à l'École cantonale d'art de Lausanne, Suisse  
**Jacques Malthête:** Historien du cinéma, ancien directeur de recherche au Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Paris

Dans notre domaine, l'année 2011 est à marquer d'une pierre blanche. À l'exception d'une poignée de vues Lumière, jamais encore un film appartenant à l'héritage européen du cinéma n'avait été célébré à pareille échelle. *Le Voyage dans la Lune* de Georges Méliès réaffirmé comme l'icône même du cinéma, de Cannes en Pordenone, de Scorsese en groupe AIR, assure à l'obus fiché dans l'œil de l'astre fin de siècle une présence quasi universelle.

Le culte commença Salle Pleyel en 1929. Méliès s'y prêta de bonne grâce, voyant là un des moyens d'obtenir la reconnaissance qu'il revendiquait depuis quelques années. Cette ambition ne l'empêchait pas de considérer que cette bande ne représentait pas vraiment ce pourquoi il tenait tant à être reconnu comme cinéaste parmi les pionniers.

De ce culte, les historiens établiront un jour l'alternance des phases et la composition des serviteurs. Ils s'interrogeront peut-être sur l'écart, apparemment impossible à combler, entre la connaissance effective que l'on a de l'œuvre de Méliès et la réduction persistante de sa production à ce film moindrement représentatif. Ils examineront certainement à quelle vision du cinéma il se prêta chaque fois et qui s'en firent les interprètes.

Dans notre domaine, l'année 2011 est à marquer d'une pierre noire. Jamais peut-être la remise en circulation d'un film ancien n'a été accompagnée d'une telle confusion sur le sens du mot restauration.

Laisser dire qu'avec ce *Voyage dans la Lune* en couleurs, on a découvert un film oublié ou perdu est facile. L'idée même de la trouvaille est trop attrayante pour qu'une fois suggérée tout le monde n'en fasse pas son miel, du journaliste d'agence au critique spécialisé.

Et penser que l'importance de la somme investie dans la remise en circulation d'un film aussi premier, aussi fragile, aussi emblématique finalement, soit une garantie d'excellence, la chose vient sans peine, tant qu'on ne s'interroge pas sur l'usage publicitaire qui est fait des chiffres – quatre cent mille euros pour 13 375 images, précise-t-on, mais pour dire quoi? – et sur le produit lui-même.

Pourquoi est-il si difficile à des archives d'appeler un chat un chat, voire de l'exiger, dès lors qu'elles sont nommément impliquées dans une entreprise de cette sorte? Pourquoi des lieux comme Le Giornate del cinema muto ou Il Cinema ritrovato n'engagent-ils pas le débat, plutôt que de couvrir de leur

prestige une remise en circulation que leur complaisance permet de faire passer pour ce qu'elle n'est précisément pas, c'est-à-dire une restauration dans les règles de l'art ?

Pourquoi ne dit-on pas de cet artefact qu'il provient en partie d'une copie dont on sait bien qu'elle ne sort pas du laboratoire de Méliès, passage de l'Opéra à Paris, mais qu'il s'agit très vraisemblablement d'un tirage piraté à l'époque, à l'image floue et granulée, et que ses coloris y furent posés à une date inconnue par d'autres petites mains que celles qui œuvraient vers 1902 pour la marque Star Film ?

Les lacunes de cette copie apocryphe ont été comblées par des emprunts faits à une deuxième copie d'époque, appartenant à Mme. Madeleine Malthête-Méliès. Celle-ci est authentique et en bel état, bien qu'un « défaut » la dépare : elle est en noir et blanc.

Qu'à cela ne tienne, le défaut a été rectifié. Les prélèvements ont été laborieusement masqués par l'adjonction d'un coloriage numérique aux teintes non seulement très criardes – alignées sur les teintes du nitrate lacunaire, elles aussi exagérément rehaussées par un traitement numérique –, et sans qu'aient été reproduits ni le tremblé ni le débordement typiques des coloris appliqués au pinceau.

Les interventions sont radicales. Elles n'épargnent ni le cadre de l'image d'origine, raboté, ni les particularités matérielles de celle-ci. La « restitution » efface la double origine du matériel, gomme la teinte primitivement jaune de la copie en couleurs – une caractéristique fort probablement associable au piratage d'origine –, supprime enfin les traces originelles de retouche liées principalement aux trucages, qui font partie intégrante du style de Méliès comme de ses contemporains.

Pourquoi faire accroire que LA copie en couleurs du film de Méliès fut découverte à la Filmoteca de Catalunya, et ne pas dire qu'elle appartient à un fonds de 250 boîtes déposé anonymement en 1993 et qu'il s'agit du versement d'un lot de copies anciennes ayant circulé régionalement, en Catalogne, au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle ? Celle du *Voyage dans la Lune* présente un type de perforations américaines

qui ne correspondent pas aux perforations Méliès originelles et il est clair, encore une fois, que ce nitrate espagnol n'est pas un tirage de première génération, comme on doit savoir qu'il est loin d'être la ruine complète que les images promotionnelles de son traitement donnent à voir. Enfin, d'autres copies de ce film fameux, les unes colorées, les autres en noir et blanc, peuplent depuis longtemps les archives, en France, en Hollande, au Royaume-Uni, aux États-Unis...

Pourquoi ne s'offusque-t-on pas du fait que des archives publiques se sont vues dépossédées d'une copie qui tire son sens du territoire où elle fut utilisée, transmise et déposée – ce sont bien les couleurs du drapeau espagnol qu'on y voit peintes, non celles du drapeau français ? Est-il insignifiant que ces mêmes archives n'ont pas été consultées sur l'usage de cette copie et ne disposent aujourd'hui d'aucune documentation à son sujet ?

Outre cette pratique alarmante, serions-nous en présence d'un faux historique et artistique ? Nous sommes en tout cas devant un objet qu'aucune archive digne de ce nom ne saurait, à nos yeux, cautionner comme restauration, car sa fabrication n'obéit à aucun des principes destinés à éviter que l'œuvre, dans sa forme nécessairement nouvelle, dénature les éléments dont elle procède et que soit empêchée toute recherche sérieuse à partir de la copie restaurée.

Dans son livre si fidèlement adapté par Scorsese, *L'invention de Hugo Cabret*, Brian Selznick avertit le lecteur qu'il a fait œuvre de fiction et que si « le cinéaste Georges Méliès a réellement existé, la personnalité qu'[il] lui prête est née de [s]on imagination ».

Pourquoi ne pas reconnaître aussi, dans ce *Voyage dans la Lune* que l'on prétend ressusciter dans toutes ses nuances, une invention d'aujourd'hui ?

Et si cette invention a une légitimité, celle-ci est à chercher ailleurs. C'est celle de tous les « miracles » analogues qui jalonnent l'histoire du cinéma. Ils se résument à la remise en circulation spectaculaire d'une

production ancienne, « améliorée » pour le confort supposé du public contemporain, établissant avec lui un commerce neuf.

Ce nouveau commerce ne manque évidemment pas d'intérêt comme tel. Mais il ne va pas sans véhiculer des valeurs auxquelles les archives ont le devoir d'opposer leurs propres principes. Au nom d'une sorte de prépotence technique déguisée en respect (il suffit d'aller voir comment les sites d'évaluation de dvd ont salué l'édition en Blu-ray de ce *Voyage dans la Lune*), ce sont ces valeurs qui autorisent l'adjonction de sons et de couleurs aux images d'archives, pour qu'elles soient « plus vraies », à l'exemple d'une fameuse série télévisuelle comme *Apocalypse. La Deuxième Guerre mondiale* (France 2, 2009).

Avec le temps, Méliès est définitivement devenu l'inventeur du cinéma et *Le Voyage dans la Lune* le cinéma même. Pourtant, si grande que soit la plus-value symbolique que représente l'interprétation numérique de cette œuvre-là pour ceux qui l'ont réalisée comme pour ceux qui l'ont soutenue, on prendra acte de cette version comme il faut prendre acte, parmi d'autres, de *La Sorcellerie à travers les âges* de Christensen devenu sonore en 1968, du *Metropolis* de Lang revu par Moroder en 1984, de l'œuvre de Vigo réaccordée aux oreilles de 2001 : en disant d'abord, et clairement, ce qu'il en est.

S'agissant de nommer, faisons un pas de plus. On se souvient du fameux cas de *Life of an American Fireman*, étudié naguère. Quand les cinémathèques appliqueront la norme catalographique permettant enfin de saisir les variantes, combien de jolis monstres muséaux sortiront-ils des boîtes ? Quand elles feront enfin état des informations documentant leurs propres tirages – encore faudrait-il qu'elles aient établi des dossiers de restauration... –, de combien de gestes irréversibles, de films améliorés, de copies rectifiées ferons-nous le constat ?

Le nombre importe moins, dans ce débat, que les raisons et la manière, les circonstances et les décideurs. Ce serait l'esquisse d'une véritable histoire de la transmission.

Dans un domaine que l'on sait historiquement et matériellement déterminé par la variation et la reproduction, considérer que la variante est la norme, soumettre le régime des auteurs au régime des copies, ce serait instaurer une position qui rende toutes les autres possibles plutôt que de les exclure.

*A Trip to the Moon* (*Le Voyage dans la Lune*, Georges Méliès, 1902) was recently presented in a version produced by Lobster Films in Paris. Since its inaugural screening at the Cannes Film Festival in 2011, this version has been widely and repeatedly portrayed as a faithful rendition of Méliès' famous film.

A statement of this kind reflects a peculiar view of what constitutes a restoration; worse, it shows the extent to which such a term may be inappropriately used. In essence, the project turned out to erase from view what is pertaining to both the materiality of the original work and the diversity of the print elements utilized for this alleged restitution of the film.

One of the sources for this version is most probably a pirated copy, struck at the time of the film's original distribution. It is a grainy print of mediocre photographic quality, from the Filmoteca de Catalunya in Barcelona. It is not known when the color was manually applied to this element.

In the Lobster version of the film, the gaps of the Spanish copy were filled with footage from another print (in black and white) owned by Madeleine Malthête-Méliès; its provenance is, in this case, Georges Méliès' own laboratory in Paris. Color was digitally superimposed to this black and white footage, in an attempt to match the hues of the Spanish print. Color saturation has been exaggerated throughout the entire film; the trembling, irregular strokes of manually applied dyes that are typical of early films have been replaced in the black and white copy by steady patches of color without extending beyond the colorized parts.

These alterations are radical in their nature. Other interventions affect the shape of the frame and its aspect ratio. In essence, this version ends up hiding from view the dual origin of the original images, as well as the yellowish background of the film base (probably related to the apocryphal duplication process). Even more importantly, it conceals from view the retouching work mainly associated with the magic effects which are so important in Méliès' style as much as for his contemporaries.

Film archives ought to be alarmed by this kind of "restoration". To the extent that quality in the transmission of the cinematic heritage is a matter of concern for collecting institutions, a closer look at how this version was put together is in order.

*El Viaje a la luna* (*Le Voyage dans la Lune*, Georges Méliès, 1902) vive hoy una renovada difusión bajo la forma de una versión producida por Lobster Films (Paris). Ha sido triunfalísticamente presentada como la fiel reconstrucción del reputado film de Méliès, afirmación que oímos repetir por todas partes desde su presentación dentro del Festival de Cannes de 2011.

Esa pretensión surge de una manera peculiar de entender la restauración o, peor aún, de un uso abusivo del término. De hecho, la operación consiste en borrar todas las huellas materiales que caracterizan tanto la obra original como las de los elementos reunidos para su supuesta reconstrucción.

Una de las copias utilizadas (porveniente de la Filmoteca de Catalunya) es un tiraje, pirateado en época, que presenta una imagen desenfocada y con mucho grano, tiraje que fue coloreado en fecha indeterminada.

Las lagunas que presentaba esa copia apócrifa han sido corregidas con material que se ha tomado prestado de una segunda copia en blanco y negro, procedente directamente del laboratorio parisino de Méliès y que pertenece a Madeleine Malthête-Méliès.

Esos préstamos han sido enmascarados por el añadido de un coloreado digital de tonos que no sólo son demasiado chillones y que toman como referencia los del nitrato incompleto, a su vez exageradamente reforzados por un tratamiento digital, sino que además son incapaces de reproducir el temblor y el desboradamiento típicos de los coloreados hechos con pincel.

Las intervenciones son radicales: no respeta ni el encuadre de la imagen original ni sus particularidades materiales. La "reconstrucción" borra el doble origen del material pues hace desaparecer el teñido amarillo primitivo de la primera copia –una característica que es muy probable haya que asociar al pirateo– sino que también suprime los rastros originales de los retoques asociados a los trucajes, rastros que son parte integrante del estilo de Méliès y sus contemporáneos.

Si el nivel de excelencia debiera tomar como referencia la forma de esa nueva copia de *Voyage dans la Lune* eso supondría una señal de alarma para las instituciones que se ocupan de la transmisión del patrimonio cinematográfico, que son casi siempre las mismas que los preservan.



# Le Voyage dans la Lune: Une restauration exemplaire

Serge Bromberg

**Serge Bromberg:** Fondateur de Lobster Films avec Éric Lange en 1985. Restaurateur de films depuis 25 ans, collectionneur, animateur de spectacles où il accompagne des films muets au piano, Directeur Artistique du festival d'Annecy et membre du conseil d'administration de la Cinémathèque française.

Un article blessant a pris pour cible notre restauration du *Voyage dans la Lune*, telle qu'engagée par Lobster Film en 1999, et réalisée en partenariat avec la Fondation Technicolor pour le Patrimoine du Cinéma et la Fondation Groupama Gan pour le Cinéma. Le laboratoire des Archives françaises du film du CNC (Bois d'Arcy) a effectué le scan de la copie en noir et blanc de Madeleine Malthête-Méliès, et d'un court fragment du contretypage réalisé en 1929 pour l'hommage organisé par Mauclair à la Salle Pleyel, aujourd'hui propriété du CNC.

Emprunt de mots volontairement choisis pour discréditer les promoteurs et la nature du projet, l'article se veut neutre tout en abordant une question fondamentale. Il a été écrit par des spécialistes et universitaires que par ailleurs nous respectons pleinement : mais cela ne leur donne pas tous les droits.

Il laisse accroire que cette restauration n'est qu'une interprétation de notre part, un artefact, un faux historique effectué sans précaution ni expérience par une société privée (bien sûr) pour des raisons de commerce. Seuls les mots « amateurs » ou « apprentis sorciers » ne figurent pas dans l'article, mais le lecteur aura compris de lui-même. Les termes choisis dans l'article discréditent l'analyse qu'il entend proposer.

Si nous partageons évidemment les préoccupations des auteurs sur l'exigence d'authenticité, qu'on ne compte pas sur nous pour répondre sur le même ton. Voici notre point de vue sur le fond, et aussi sur la forme.

Pour les questions techniques, sachez que Jacques Malthête a régulièrement été consulté et associé à nos travaux. Il les a validés jusqu'à un curieux volte-face de dernière minute. Pour tous les détails techniques, faute de place, nous vous renvoyons sur le lien suivant, où tout sera décrit et expliqué : <http://levoyagedanslaluneblog.blogspot.fr/>

Les spécialistes y découvriront que rien n'a été caché, que cette restauration fut en tout point exemplaire, et aura respecté les règles qui s'imposent aux restaurateurs fidèles et professionnels, soucieux du respect de l'œuvre comme de la vérité historique.

Comme vous le verrez, tout a bien été décrit, écrit, documenté, avec encore plus de détails que le livre de 190 pages, le film de 64 minutes qui racontent cette aventure, et la conférence de 2 heures à Pordenone où tout ce qui nous est reproché ici a été évoqué, débattu, discuté. Une autre conférence, au BAFTA, à Londres, a également repris tous ces points, en présence de nombreux archivistes internationaux.



Assemblage de 6 fragments s'étant décollés en se brisant, et rassemblés sur une plate-forme numérique

Nous y avons évoqué toutes ces questions, raconté les mystères auxquels nul ne répondra jamais, et expliqué pourquoi nous avons décidé de persévérer car nous pensons notre démarche totalement légitime. Le donateur anonyme en 1993 et la Cineteca de Catalunya ont systématiquement été cités et remerciés, et je crois que les plus grands archivistes de la planète ont ce jour-là partagé nos doutes, et adoubé nos décisions.

Contrairement à ces « monstres » que furent *La Sorcellerie à Travers les Ages*, ou encore le *Metropolis* de Moroder, notre restauration est on ne peut plus fidèle à l'original comme il aurait pu nous parvenir si la décomposition n'avait fait son œuvre.

Bien sûr, et contrairement à ce qu'affirme l'article, le cadre de notre restauration est absolument intégral (cette question est passionnante, et évoquée sur le site, puisqu'il y a en effet deux cadres différents pour un même film !). Les vibrations des couleurs sont bien là (puisque'elles proviennent de la copie d'origine),

et les différentes étapes de notre travail ont été conservées, comme le permet le numérique, permettant à tout moment la réversibilité.

Seule la musique de AIR est venue donner à l'œuvre une touche de modernité pour rétablir le lien avec un nouveau public : ce sont les Fondations qui ont entièrement supervisé ce choix et la production de la musique, à laquelle nous souscrivons pleinement : mais coupez le son, et l'œuvre de Méliès est bien intégralement là ! Et à compter de Septembre 2012, chacun pourra mettre la musique de son choix sur le film redevenu œuvre d'origine muette, comme en 1902.

Le cinéma est art de reproduction. L'original est un négatif, que personne ne verra jamais. Pour *Le Voyage dans la Lune*, quelle est la copie la plus authentique ? Un marron de quatrième génération en noir et blanc, établi en 1983 par les Méliès ? Une copie teintée en 1929 avec quelques coups de pinceau pour recréer l'illusion des origines ? La version néerlandaise avec des intertitres en



L'image finale restaurée

allemand, ou la version courte ayant circulé aux États-Unis? Méliès lui-même proposait des copies à partir de négatifs de 2<sup>ème</sup> génération, comme le prouve le négatif américain volé à New York en 1905 et jamais retrouvé (la copie de la famille Méliès fut tirée d'après le négatif original quelques années plus tard).

Contrairement à ce qu'affirme l'article, après de longues recherches, nous pouvons affirmer que la copie retrouvée en Catalogne est bien antérieure à 1906 (perforations Edison), et qu'elle est la seule coloriée existante à ce jour. Si elle est indéniablement tirée d'un négatif de 2<sup>ème</sup> génération, son coloriage est authentique, date de l'époque, et a été effectué par une ou des personnes reproduisant avec un incroyable talent le degré de qualité obtenu dans les ateliers de Mme Thuillier. Je ne vois pas quel amateur aurait pu réussir ce tour de force sans expérience et sans métier.

Nous n'avons jamais affirmé avec certitude que cette copie a été coloriée par les ouvrières de Mme Thuillier, mais nous affirmons avec

certitude que Méliès – qui sous-traitait parfois le coloriage dans des ateliers à l'étranger – avait voulu que son film soit colorié, qu'il l'avait approuvé. Le coloriage effectué sur notre copie source est une œuvre authentique et contemporaine de Méliès. Piratée ou non, cette copie est un miracle de beauté, et répéter à l'envi le terme « piratage » en n'a pour but que de nous discréditer.

Les couleurs du drapeau sur la copie confirment évidemment qu'elle fut coloriée pour un client espagnol. Elles ont bien sûr été conservées, comme toutes les autres couleurs originales (y compris la teinte jaune du support d'origine), car ce que nous avons restauré, c'est cette copie particulière, avec son coloriage, et rien d'autre. Nous n'avons rien inventé, ni ajouté. Serions-nous revenus au bleu blanc rouge français, notre entreprise eut certainement été condamnable.

Enfin, nous avons depuis le début affirmé que notre objectif était de rendre ce film le plus visible possible dans le respect de



Serge Bromberg et Tom Burton, chez Technicolor Creative Services, Hollywood, testant le procédé de reconstitution des couleurs sur un fragment ne survivant qu'en noir et blanc



Pendant trois ans, chaque morceau de la copie originale a été numérisée avec le meilleur appareil numérique existant à l'époque (circa 2001)



l'œuvre. Non seulement il est proposé dans le monde entier accompagné du documentaire racontant l'aventure du premier succès mondial du cinéma à travers le siècle, mais il est prévu depuis le début que des dizaines de copies soient déposées dans les grandes archives à travers le monde, à commencer par la Cinémathèque de Catalogne, comme nous l'avions promis à Anton Giménez.

Nous sommes des gens honnêtes, et le négatif de sauvegarde fabriqué (il ne l'est pas encore), cette promesse sera tenue.

### QU'EST-CE QUE L'AUTHENTIQUE?

Toutes les restaurations modernes sont issues des meilleurs éléments disponibles. La plupart des films sont aujourd'hui numérisés à partir des négatifs originaux (celui du *Voyage* fut brûlé par Méliès en 1923), supprimant ainsi l'effet de génération et de granulation propres à la pellicule positive et aux éléments intermédiaires.

Nous pouvons désormais voir ce qu'a vu l'opérateur, sans l'intermédiaire obligé qu'est l'émulsion argentique. Plus de génération, une réalité froide et sans défaut. Plus de poinçons de fin de bobine, de déclenchement aux fondus enchaînés, de rayures et collages qui firent notre bonheur passé. C'est avec eux que s'est construit notre cinéphilie. Je suis un amoureux de la pellicule, et il n'est rien que j'apprécie davantage.

Pour les sons, la question est la même. La bonne lecture du négatif son original restitue aujourd'hui une richesse sonore que les spectateurs de l'époque, et probablement les ingénieurs du son du film, n'ont pu percevoir à travers les systèmes d'écoute d'antan.

Ces nouvelles restaurations, parfaites dans leur restitution technique des éléments d'origine, ne sont pas des restitutions de l'expérience de l'époque de sortie des œuvres.

J'affirme que nombre de réalisateurs se seraient réjouis de voir leur film dans cette pureté technique, qui ne s'use pas dès la première projection de la copie. Et si nous devons rester modestes et ne rien inventer, personne n'a le droit de critiquer ces restaurateurs modernes qui restaurent ce qu'ils ont entre les mains

de façon respectueuse, exigeante, moderne, conformément aux exigences des propriétaires et souvent des auteurs des films.

Les technologies permettent de créer des monstres inacceptables (étalonnages fantaisistes, récréation de montages reniés par l'auteur, nouveaux mixages multidirectionnels, etc.). Nous ne les cautionnons évidemment pas. Elles donnent tant de possibilité de mentir qu'elles imposent aux véritables restaurateurs – dont nous sommes – un devoir d'exigence et de vérité plus grand encore.

En effectuant notre travail sur *Le Voyage dans la Lune*, nous pensons avoir fait un travail de restauration et de transmission sincère et irréprochable, dans les règles de l'art. Les lecteurs sur Internet en décideront.

Restent les questions de fond posées par MM. Cosandey et Malthête. Elles sont complexes, se posent à tous ceux qui ont les mains dans les technologies et la pellicule. Elles s'imposent à nous comme le rappel qu'il y a des limites à ne jamais franchir.

Et en cela, ils ont entièrement raison.

The author replies to the criticism by Cosandey and Malthête of his recent restoration of Georges Méliès' *A Trip to the Moon* (*Le Voyage dans la Lune*). As a true lover of celluloid, he has faithfully sought to follow the principles of restoration. He has preserved all the elements as found and done nothing that cannot be reversed. Jacques Malthête was regularly consulted during the work and validated it until he had a curious about-face at the last minute. While there is not space here for a complete analysis, the work is open for inspection and fully documented, as may be seen at the following website, in which all the technical details are described and explained: <http://levoyagedanslaluneleblog.blogspot.fr/>

Cinema is the art of reproduction. Which copy is the most authentic? Contrary to Cosandey and Malthête, after long research, we can affirm that the copy found in Catalonia was made before 1906 (with Edison perforations), and is the only existing colour copy discovered to this day. If it is undeniably from a second-generation negative, its colour is authentic for the epoch and was done by a professional. The flag colours confirm that it was coloured for a Spanish client. We used no other source to determine the colour in our restoration. The framings are the same as in the source, the colour vibrations are there.

What is authenticity? Most films today are digital, apart from the original negative. (Georges Méliès burned the original negative of *A Trip to the Moon* in 1923.) With digital, the difference in generations is gone, the grain is gone. It is the same with sound, which we hear today with a richness unavailable to the sound systems in old times. These new restorations are not precise restorations of the experience at the time the films were first seen.

Technology allows us to create unacceptable monstrosities such as Moroder's *Metropolis*, but our restoration is a result of an earnest effort to be faithful to the source materials, only excepting the damages of deterioration.

There remain profound questions posed by Cosandey and Malthête. They are complex, they are questions confronting all those who work with the new technologies and celluloid film. They remind us that there are limitations. And in that, Cosandey and Malthête are right.

Bromberg responde a la crítica de Cosandey y Malthête sobre su restauración del *Viaje a la luna* (*Le Voyage dans la Lune*) de Georges Méliès. Señala que como auténtico amante del celuloide, procuró seguir escrupulosamente los principios de la restauración. Preservó todos los elementos tal como los encontró y no tomó ninguna medida irreversible. Jacques Malthête fue consultado durante los trabajos, a los que validó hasta que operó un curioso cambio de actitud de último momento. No disponiendo de espacio para un análisis completo, el autor subraya que todo el proceso está plenamente documentado y disponible para su evaluación en el sitio Web en el que se describen e ilustran los detalles técnicos: <http://levoyagedanslaluneleblog.blogspot.fr/>

El cine es el arte de la reproducción. ¿Cuál es la copia más auténtica? Contrariamente a lo que afirman Cosandey y Malthête, luego de largas investigaciones, podemos afirmar que la copia encontrada en Cataluña fue realizada antes de 1906 (con perforaciones Edison), y que es la única copia en color descubierta hasta hoy. Se trata indudablemente de una reproducción que se obtuvo a partir de un negativo de segunda generación. Sus colores corresponden a los de la época, y el proceso ha sido llevado a cabo por un profesional. Los colores del emblema español impreso en los bordes confirman que ha sido coloreada para un cliente español. No se utilizó otra fuente para determinar los colores de la restauración. Los encuadres y la frecuencia cromática corresponden a los de la fuente de la imagen.

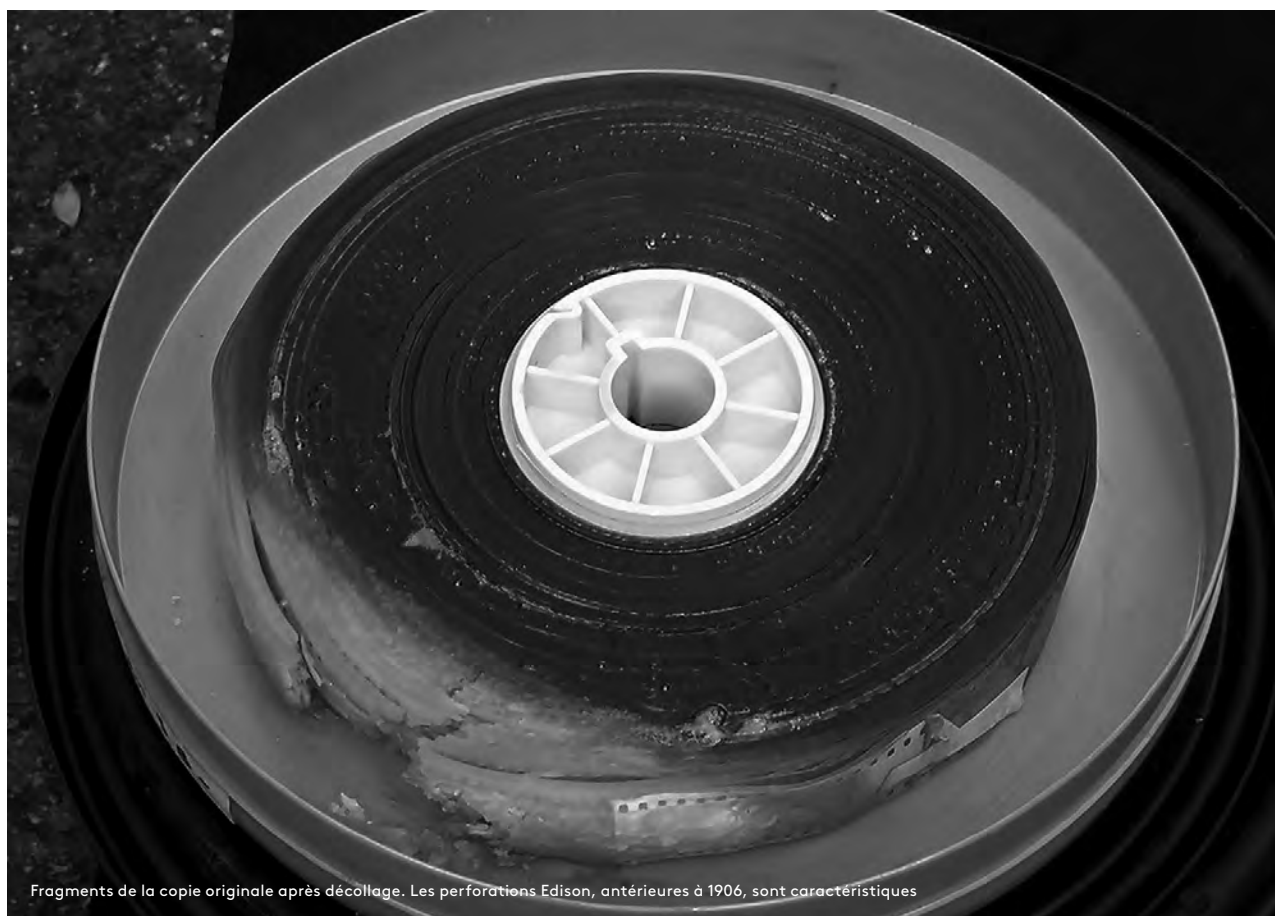
¿Qué es la autenticidad? La mayoría de las películas hoy día se encuentran en formato digital, a parte del negativo original. (Georges Méliès quemó el negativo original de *Voyage dans la Lune* en 1923.) Con la aparición de la tecnología digital, desapareció la diferencia entre las generaciones de las copias. Desapareció el granulado de la imagen. Lo mismo ocurrió con el sonido, que escuchamos hoy con una riqueza que no se conocía con los sistemas sonoros de los primeros tiempos del cine. Las nuevas restauraciones no son fiel reconstitución de las experiencias de exhibición de las películas del tiempo en que fueron mostradas por primera vez.

La tecnología nos permite crear monstruosidades inaceptables tales como *Metropolis* de Moroder, pero nuestra restauración es el resultado de un esfuerzo sincero de fidelidad al material-fuente, con la excepción de los daños causados por el deterioro.

Subsisten cuestionamientos legítimos formulados por Cosandey y Malthête. Se trata de problemas complejos, que se plantean a quienes trabajan con las nuevas tecnologías en la restauración del celuloide. Ambos nos recuerdan que hay que respetar ciertas limitaciones. Y tienen razón.



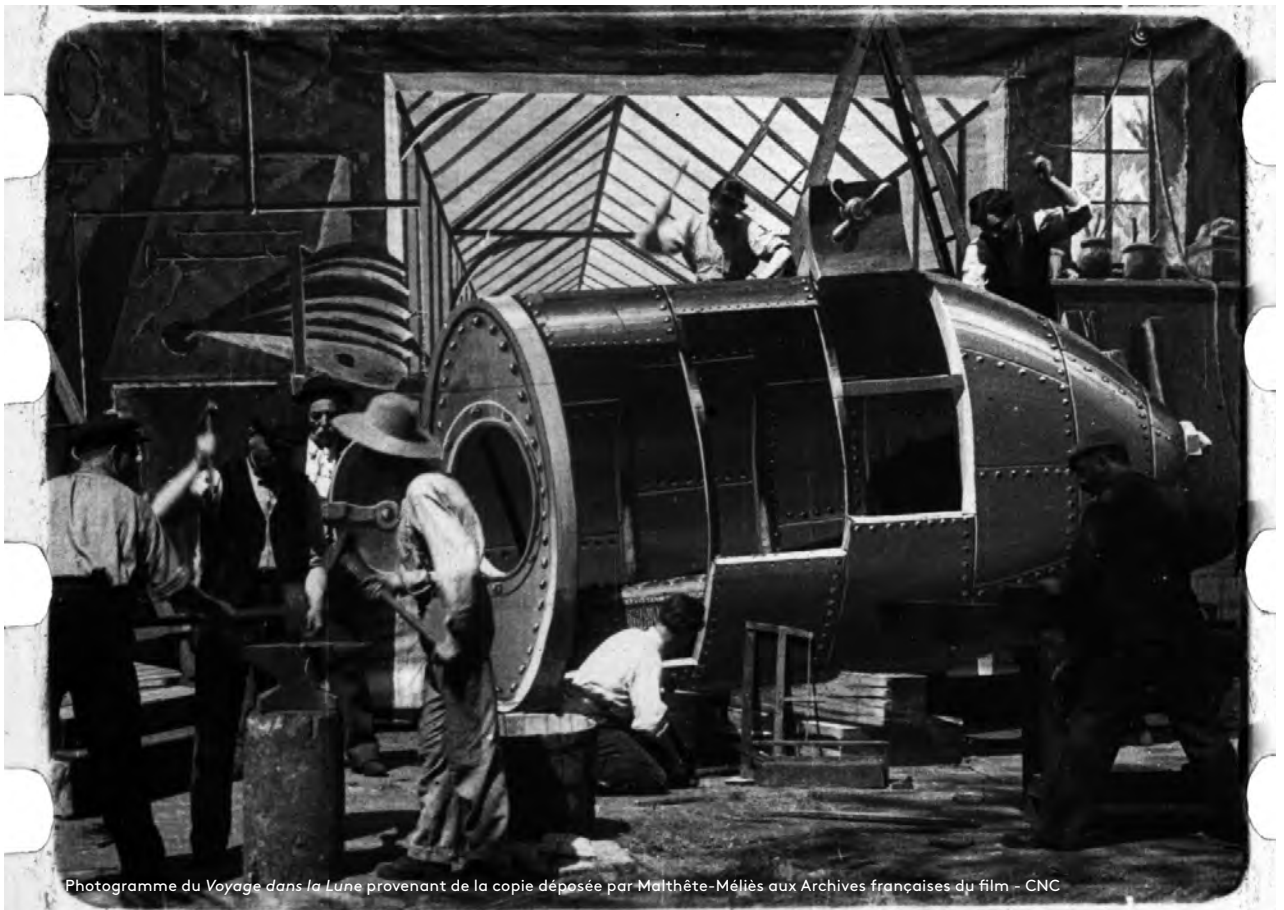
Photogrammes successifs de la copie originale qui se sont décollés sans casser



Fragments de la copie originale après décollage. Les perforations Edison, antérieures à 1906, sont caractéristiques



Photogramme du *Voyage dans la Lune* provenant de la copie déposée par Malthête-Méliès aux Archives françaises du film - CNC



Photogramme du *Voyage dans la Lune* provenant de la copie déposée par Malthête-Méliès aux Archives françaises du film - CNC



# Polémique autour d'un Voyage

Béatrice de Pastre

**Béatrice de Pastre:** Directrice des collections aux Archives françaises du film du Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée, Paris - Bois d'Arcy

Le mérite de la polémique ouverte – malgré ses accents acides – est de nous ramener à des concepts et des questions simples, fondements de nos métiers. Ceux-ci sont liés à des artefacts historiques – irrémédiablement inscrits dans une histoire – et en même temps fascinés par des technologies dont les incessants progrès laissent à croire que l'on peut non seulement revisiter cette histoire, mais aussi par-delà, ressusciter le passé. C'est là qu'il nous faut nous arrimer à quelques principes salutaires.

## QUEL EST L'OBJET À RESTAURER ?

Cette question dans d'autres domaines artistiques n'a pas lieu d'être, on ne la pose pas au restaurateur du plafond de la chapelle Sixtine, en revanche pour « l'œuvre d'art à l'époque de la reproductibilité technique », elle devient essentielle. Évidence, certes, mais souvent casse-tête pour le restaurateur de films qui compare négatif endommagé, remonté (quand il peut avoir accès à ces éléments), copies malmenées par les projections ou des particularismes idéologiques (mettons dans ce panier ces copies passées à travers les censures politiques, ou religieuses, ou celles qui grâce à quelques coups de pinceaux habiles transforment un drapeau français en drapeau espagnol). Ajoutons à cet ensemble

quelques générations de contretypes, interpositifs, etc., et l'on aura une idée du paysage à ordonner. Mais ordonner par rapport à quoi ? Le patron de la couturière fait souvent défaut, et la mosaïque composée sera plutôt conforme à l'idée que le restaurateur a pu se forger de l'œuvre grâce à sa connaissance de l'histoire du cinéma, du réalisateur, de l'histoire des techniques. Et nous ne sommes pas loin de la pratique de Viollet-le-Duc, pourtant si longtemps honnis et agité comme un repoussoir. En l'absence d'original – la copie d'exploitation d'origine, « intacte » en ferait office, si l'on retient cette notion comme pertinente dans le domaine cinématographique – nous devons nous souvenir que :

1. l'objet ou les objets sur lesquels s'appuie le travail de restauration sont des artefacts divers, des variantes d'une œuvre, qui en tant que telle, n'a souvent qu'une existence conceptuelle;
2. ces objets sont le fruit d'une histoire culturelle et d'une histoire technologique qui en font l'originalité, le prix. Restaurer ne veut pas dire gommer ces particularismes qui sont la clef de la compréhension de l'objet à traiter, à montrer.

## UNE RESTAURATION OU DES RESTAURATIONS ?

Un film (une œuvre) peut ainsi être l'objet de plusieurs restaurations dépendant de l'artefact sur lequel elle(s) s'appuie(nt). Ainsi pour reprendre le cas du *Voyage dans la Lune* de Georges Méliès, il semble primordial de restaurer et montrer librement au public :

- la copie noir et blanc, issue du négatif original, propriété de Madeleine Malthête-Méliès qui donne à voir le cadre original, les collures caractéristiques des trucages tels que les pratiquait Méliès, mais copie sur laquelle il manque le tableau final. Cet objet est très probablement celui qui se rapproche le plus du film mis en circulation par la Star Film en 1902.
- la copie colorisée au pinceau issue d'une collection privée conservée à la Cinémathèque de Catalogne, transmise à Lobster Films. Issue d'un négatif fabriqué à partir d'une copie, cette variante est le témoin de la circulation précoce des films sur le continent européen. Mise en couleurs en Espagne ? Pourquoi pas, les films réalisés par Segundo de Chomón témoignent de la maîtrise de cette technique dans la péninsule ibérique. Copie catalane ? Peut-être, mais un catalan aurait-il choisi le drapeau espagnol pour emblème ? En tout cas, cette variante du *Voyage dans la Lune* atteste d'une volonté de s'approprier les images (ce qui, en même temps dit leur universalité bien sûr), et d'un choix particulier de couleurs qui, malgré la teinte jaune prise au fil du temps et des traitements par la pellicule support, donne un cachet particulier à cette copie.
- La copie reconstituée par Jean Mauclair en 1929, lacunaire puisqu'elle est amputée du premier tableau, mais témoignage émouvant de la première entreprise de remise à jour de l'œuvre de Méliès. L'hétérogénéité des éléments lacunaires sollicités, aux cadres différents, révèlent les difficultés auxquelles s'est heurté Mauclair dans son entreprise de reconstitution. Les teintages et les rehauts au pochoir, agréés par Méliès, donnent à cet élément une

valeur sentimentale forte qui se surajoute à la valeur historique de l'ensemble. Ne s'agit-il pas de la première tentative de restauration de l'histoire du cinéma ?

Ce bref inventaire, qui ne s'en tient qu'aux trois copies ayant contribué à la restauration de 2011, montre qu'en aucun cas on ne peut parler d'une Restauration, et surtout lui donner un caractère définitif. Les travaux effectués en 2011 par le laboratoire Technicolor de Los Angeles ont permis de restituer une copie couleur précise du film de Georges Méliès. Elle n'est pas un « sommet », ni une fin, et ne doit en rien occulter les autres variantes de l'œuvre de Méliès porteuses d'un autre poids historique et technique. Celles-ci doivent aussi poursuivre leur parcours vers le public. Ainsi sera restituée l'histoire de cette œuvre devenue emblématique.

## DE LA MODESTIE DU RESTAURATEUR

Si une œuvre appartient à une sphère culturelle donnée et à un univers technologique défini, il est évident – mais on l'oublie aussi souvent – qu'il en va de même du restaurateur. Une restauration est le fruit de la confrontation entre deux univers éloignés dans le temps et dans l'espace : celui de la variante et celui du restaurateur. Prenons quelques exemples. Au début des années 1980, le patrimoine cinématographique n'est pas cette institution que nous connaissons aujourd'hui et il s'agit pour les archivistes et conservateurs de restaurer, certes, mais aussi de faire circuler le plus largement possible les trésors qu'ils ont exhumés des stocks de boîtes qu'ils gèrent tant bien que mal. À cet effet, le premier conservateur de ce qui est alors le service des archives du film du CNC, Frantz Schmitt, restaura au format sonore (cadre tronqué), recadencé à 24i/s, les films de Gaston Velle, Louis Feuillade et autres « pionniers » du récit cinématographique. Son but : faire circuler ces films dans les salles de cinéma, toutes les salles, dont les projecteurs ne connaissent plus ni variateur de vitesse ni « couloir » pour le passage des copies muettes. C'était aussi une façon pour lui d'attirer l'attention du Ministère de la culture sur les milliers d'autres films qui attendaient les soins du restaurateur. De même en 1984, la variante de *Metropolis* produite par Giorgio Moroder fit connaître le chef d'œuvre de Fritz Lang à travers le monde.

La bande son commanditée à Freddie Mercury et Adam Ant (on y reconnaît aussi Pat Benatar, Bonnie Tyler, Jon Anderson...) en fait un opéra rock que le public s'approprié avec enthousiasme. L'une et l'autre de ses entreprises, aujourd'hui décriées, attestent de l'inscription du restaurateur dans son temps : technologique pour Frantz Schmitt, culturel pour Moroder. Et pourtant l'une et l'autre ont servi le patrimoine cinématographique, nous les regardons aujourd'hui comme trace d'une pratique (à ne pas reproduire), témoignage sur un état de l'art à un moment donné. La version du *Voyage dans la Lune* mise en son par le groupe Air est à ce titre tout aussi « mode » et donc « démodable », tout comme le sera probablement la performance numérique qui a permis la restitution de la variante espagnole du film.

Programmateurs de films restaurés et public au regard aseptisé par une longue fréquentation des DVD HD, rejettent aujourd'hui avec mépris les restaurations argentiques qui, il y a moins de vingt ans, faisaient salles comblées et événements mondains à l'Opéra Bastille, au Cirque d'Hiver ou au Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, pour ne rester que dans le microcosme parisien. Depuis ces soirées où *Playtime* ou *L'Argent* nous semblèrent avoir retrouvé tout leur éclat originel, est apparue la technologie numérique avec ses nettoyages automatiques, ses interpolations, ses logiciels de stabilisation. Et tout le patrimoine cinématographique se doit de passer à travers ces programmes pour avoir une chance de (re)trouver un public. Ces palettes graphiques qui effacent les poils caméras, les effluves, les collures et tout ce qui dans l'image permettait de renvoyer au temps de la création – donc de comprendre le film – qui aujourd'hui laissent pantois (un peu comme une lessive surpuissante) seront très probablement dépassées dans une petite dizaine d'années. Et ce que l'on adore aujourd'hui sera à reprendre. Alors, gardons-nous de sacraliser et de prendre pour définitif ces artefacts qui ne sont que le résultat d'une technologie donnée, appliquée à un objet du passé, par des hommes du début du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le restaurateur n'est pas un *deus ex machina* mais un artisan maîtrisant plus ou moins bien les outils à sa disposition. Au fil des décennies, ces outils changent comme la culture, les connaissances et la perception du

restaurateur. L'objet à restaurer lui, par sa matérialité est irrémédiablement inscrit dans le passé, respectons cet écart et sachons le perpétuer.

### ET L'ARGENT DANS TOUT CELA ?

Le cinéma est une industrie, une entreprise économique, il en va ainsi depuis le 28 décembre 1895. L'acte de restauration n'échappe pas à ces problématiques financières, car il coûte cher, fort cher, de plus en plus cher même avec la sophistication des outils. Ainsi le produit fini sera emblématique du savoir-faire du laboratoire opérateur. Il sert ainsi de carte de visite. Mais le prix ne fait pas tout, il n'est que l'indice des moyens mobilisés pour atteindre l'objectif visé. Mais quel est cet objectif ? Nous revenons à notre questionnement initial sur l'objet à restituer et ce que nous « projetons » à son égard de fantasmes de perfection déconnectés de ses conditions de conception et de production.

Le coût de la dernière restauration du *Voyage dans la Lune* paraît exorbitant, mais doit être rapporté au nombre d'heures de stabilisation, de nettoyage automatique et manuel, de recomposition des images absentes, de mises en couleurs d'images prélevées sur les éléments en noir et blanc, de montage, etc. Chaque action demande un ou des logiciels spécifiques et sophistiqués qui exigent des opérateurs experts. Le résultat met en exergue savoir-faire et outils et en devient un objet de promotion. Il en va de même des *making of* réalisés autour de ces entreprises de restitution. Il est d'ailleurs tout à fait intéressant de noter que ces restaurations – superproductions des temps patrimoniaux – font ainsi l'objet d'un para-texte. Si les retombées économiques de l'exploitation du film restauré ne couvriront jamais l'investissement initial, le retour en termes d'image sera conséquent. C'est une donnée à prendre en considération en ces temps économiquement troublés où les laboratoires cinématographiques peinent à trouver un nouvel équilibre « post argentique ». Ce nouveau positionnement de l'objet film fait sortir de la sphère feutrée et protégée du monde des archives pour entrer de plain-pied dans celui du marketing et des produits culturels. Car c'est bien ainsi que fut mis sur orbite *Le Voyage dans la Lune*.

Doit-on s'en offusquer? Oui, si ce nouvel objet ne nous parle pas du temps et des hommes qui ont donné vie initialement à l'œuvre et si les autres «versions» de celle-ci n'ont plus le droit de cité. Non, si cet artefact numérique (sic) peut être discuté et donne l'occasion de comprendre les techniques utilisées par Méliès, son environnement culturel et son mode si particulier de création. Non encore, si ces images sorties du passé et mises au goût des années 2010 sont bien perçues comme telles et non comme une fin en soit.

L'aventure du regard à travers l'histoire ne pourra se poursuivre qu'au prix de cette lucidité et de cette diversité des visions possibles.

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The merit of an open polemic is that it recalls us to the basic concepts and questions of our profession.

The question of the object to be restored does not exist in other domains of art. For "the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction" it becomes essential. A film may even be the object of several restorations, depending on the artefact on which they are based. In the case of *A Trip to the Moon* (*Le Voyage dans la Lune*) by Georges Méliès, it seems necessary to restore and show freely to the public:

- the black and white copy which most closely resembles the film distributed by Star Film in 1902.
- the hand-painted copy, a variant example of the very early distribution of films on the European continent.
- the incomplete copy restored in 1929, a moving testimony of the first undertaking to rediscover the work of Méliès.

If a work belongs to a given cultural sphere and to a defined technological universe, it is evident that the same goes for the restorer. A restoration is the result of the confrontation between two universes far apart in time and space, that of the object to be restored and that of the restorer.

Finally, the act of restoration does not escape financial considerations. The cost of the latest restoration of *A Trip to the Moon* seems exorbitant, but must be related to the number of hours of human labour or computer time. This new positioning of the film object brings it out of the shelter of the archives into the world of marketing and cultural products.

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El mérito de toda discusión abierta sobre el tema de las restauraciones es el de abordar conceptos y preguntas sencillas, que constituyen el fundamento mismo de nuestro oficio.

La cuestión de la restauración no se plantea cuando se trata de las obras de arte en general. En cambio cuando se trata de "la obra de arte en la época de su reproducibilidad técnica", la cuestión adquiere un carácter esencial. Una película puede ser objeto de múltiples restauraciones en función de los diferentes artefactos/soportes sobre los que se puede presentar. Refiriéndonos al caso del *Viaje a la luna* (*Le Voyage dans la Lune*) de Georges Méliès, el autor considera primordial la restauración y exhibición pública de las diversas variantes que nos llegan del pasado, tales como la copia en blanco y negro que se acerca más a la cinta puesta en circulación por la Star Film en 1902, la copia coloreada al pincel basada en una reproducción de una copia y destinada a la circulación en Europa, y la copia parcialmente reconstituida en 1929, testimonio emocionante de un primer ensayo de la reconstitución de la obra de Méliès.

Toda obra pertenece a una esfera cultural y a un universo tecnológico definido; y ocurre lo mismo con el restaurador de la obra. Una restauración es el fruto de la confrontación entre dos universos alejados entre sí en el tiempo y en el espacio: el de la variante y el del restaurador.

Y en última instancia, el acto de la restauración no escapa a las problemáticas financieras. El costo de la reciente restauración de *Viaje a la luna* parece exorbitante, pero refleja el número de horas de trabajo humano y programas de informatización utilizados. El nuevo posicionamiento del objeto film nos aleja de la esfera confortable y protegida del mundo de los archivos para propulsarnos de lleno en el marketing de los productos culturales.

# FIAF School on Wheels, Kenya, May 2012

**Thelma Ross**

**Thelma Ross:** Moving Image Cataloger, Academy Film Archive, Los Angeles; Member of the FIAF Cataloguing and Documentation Commission

The first FIAF School on Wheels to be held in Kenya took place 7-11 May 2012 in Nairobi, hosted by the Office of the Vice-President and Ministry of State for National Heritage and Culture, Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service (KNADS), under the supervision of Deputy Director Francis Mwangi. It was sponsored by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), represented by Eva Orbanz, Honorary Member and retired President of FIAF, and Christian Dimitriu, Honorary Member and retired FIAF Senior Administrator, in partnership with Goethe-Institut (GI), South Africa, represented by Peter Anders, Head of Cultural Programmes for Subsahara-Africa, who together launched the programme in Johannesburg in 2011. Training was provided by Luca Giuliani, Curator, Cineteca del Friuli, Gemona, Italy; Egbert Koppe, Senior Technician, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin; and Thelma Ross, Moving Image Cataloger, Academy Film Archive, Los Angeles, who gave instruction in their respective areas of expertise: (1) Curatorial Responsibilities / Archival Administration; (2) Film Handling / Film Preservation; (3) Cataloguing.

The relationship between KNADS and FIAF began when FIAF sponsored Francis Mwangi to attend the 2009 FIAF Summer School in Bologna, Italy. In 2010, through the project Film Archives for Africa, in collaboration with Goethe-Institut,

Karl Griep, Director of the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, paid an expert visit to several institutions with audiovisual collections in Nairobi. He was received by KNADS Director John M'reria and Mr Francis Mwangi, who both stressed the importance of improving the conditions for the preservation of Kenya's audiovisual heritage. As a result of Herr Griep's report the project sponsored Mr Mwangi for the first African NFSTA/FIAF Summer School, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2011. After Mr Mwangi attended the Summer School, with support from Director John M'reria, KNADS set aside a section to be used as a repository for moving images. KNADS and Mr Mwangi are a reference point for Kenya and other African countries, and are members of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), a regular organizer of regional ICA conferences. In 2013 they will host the general ICA conference in Nairobi.

Forty participants from 18 Kenyan institutions attended the FIAF School on Wheels in Nairobi, consisting of a mix of administrators, practitioners, and students. The training was conducted in the KNADS auditorium daily from 8:30am-5pm. The programme provided an opportunity for these institutions to get together as a group for the first time and to share information about institutional holdings and conditions. Theory and practical methods were employed to facilitate learning, including



the assembly of different audiovisual formats, PowerPoint slides and visuals, blackboard lectures, handouts, examples, and discussion. The shared FIAF background among the experts was especially helpful in providing a common scientific and cultural archival language and outlook to the topics and issues within moving image archiving. Importantly too, the varied professional backgrounds of the experts and the workplaces they represent (coming from three different kinds of archives – national, regional, and private) exposed the participants to a richness of viewpoints and contexts.

At the end of the training, an evaluation form was issued to all the participants, to gauge their understanding of the different topics and level of satisfaction with the content and structure of the programme and identify areas where they may require further guidance and training. The evaluations and resulting report from Mr Mwangi concluded that the training was unquestionably necessary and well-received. More than half of the participants indicated that they were receiving guidance in the areas of archival administration for the first time, and while the majority had heard of or received some education in general cataloguing, none of them were practitioners of moving image cataloguing. 86% of the participants felt that key areas of interest to them were appropriately addressed, and 100% said that most of their expectations were met.

As a result of the FIAF School on Wheels in Nairobi, there is a better understanding of the threat of deterioration and loss facing audiovisual materials in Kenya. The program also successfully raised the awareness of decision-makers of the importance of safeguarding Kenya's audiovisual heritage.

In general, the state of audiovisual materials and practices in Kenya can be summed up as follows:

- While there is a strong background in paper and document archiving, there is a lack of practical skills and knowledge in moving image archiving;

- The amount of audiovisual materials in Kenya is not considerable, and is housed mainly on film and video formats (predominantly 16mm and 35mm film, and U-matic and Betacam video);
- Kenyans are facing issues similar to those of archives worldwide at the present time, with the uncertainty of analog and digital audiovisual migration and preservation procedures;
- Impediments to progress and the decision-making process include:
  - ▶ the lack of full inventory and documentation (cataloguing) of audiovisual holdings;
  - ▶ inadequate playback and/or projection equipment for all the various formats held;
  - ▶ the lack of a preservation strategy sufficient for dealing with the risks facing the collection, and for developing the use and access to realize the potential value of the materials;
  - ▶ low visibility and recognition of archival activities and their role by the general public and governmental institutions.

Additional efforts to support Kenyan institutions with audiovisual collections could be accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, for a relatively limited amount of money it would be possible to temporarily migrate the moderate quantity of their U-matic and Betacam collections to a more stable carrier and therefore secure their life for the future. Alternating activities on-site for learning, sharing, and problem-solving among Kenyan institutions and opportunities to visit other archives abroad would continue building on the groundwork of knowledge that has been established through the relationship between FIAF, GI, and KNADS. A coordinated donation of equipment, supplies, and tools needed for the processing, viewing, storage, and preservation of analog formats would greatly benefit Kenyan institutions.



The participants and instructors of the FIAF School on Wheels held in Nairobi 7-11 May 2012

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La « FIAF School on Wheels » s'est déroulée du 7 au 11 mai 2012 à Nairobi au Kenya.

Elle était organisée par le cabinet du Vice-Président, le Ministère d'état de la culture et du patrimoine national et par les Services d'archives et de documentation du Kenya (KNADS), sous la supervision du directeur adjoint Francis Mwangi. L'événement était sponsorisé par la FIAF, en partenariat avec le Goethe-Institut en Afrique du sud, qui avait lancé le programme de coopération à Johannesburg en 2011, sous l'impulsion d'Eva Orbanz, Christian Dimitriu et Peter Anders. Les intervenants étaient Luca Giuliani, conservateur à la Cineteca del Friuli, qui a parlé de la responsabilité des conservateurs et de l'administration des archives; Egbert Koppe, de la Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, qui a enseigné la conservation et la manipulation des films; et Thelma Ross, de l'Academy Film Archive, qui a évoqué les questions de catalogage.

Quarante participants, provenant de 18 institutions kényanes, ont suivi les cours: administrateurs, techniciens et étudiants, auxquels le programme a donné l'opportunité de se réunir pour la première fois afin de partager leurs informations sur les conditions de travail au sein de structures institutionnelles. Les rapports et évaluations de Francis Mwangi ont indiqué que cette formation était sans nul doute nécessaire et fut à ce titre très bien accueillie. Grâce à cette « School on Wheels » à Nairobi, les participants ont une meilleure compréhension de l'état des documents audiovisuels au Kenya, qui sont menacés de détérioration et de disparition, en raison des moyens limités en personnel, équipement et conditions de stockage adéquates. Ce programme a également réussi à faire prendre conscience aux décideurs de l'importance de la sauvegarde du patrimoine audiovisuel du Kenya.

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La Escuela sobre ruedas FIAF (FIAF School on Wheels), tuvo lugar en Nairobi, Kenia, del 7 al 11 de mayo 2012, por invitación de la Oficina del vicepresidente y ministro de estado para el legado cultural y el Servicio de los archivos nacionales y documentación, el Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service (KNADS), bajo la supervisión del director adjunto Francis Mwangi, y la participación financiera de la FIAF y el Goethe-Institut en Sudáfrica. FIAF estaba representada por Eva Orbanz y Christian Dimitriu, y Peter Anders del Goethe-Institut, iniciadores del acuerdo de cooperación en la Región.

Los cursos estuvieron a cargo de Luca Giuliani, Cineteca del Friuli (responsabilidades y administración de archivos); Egbert Koppe, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv (manutención y conservación de películas); y Thelma Ross, Academy Film Archive (catalogación).

Más de 40 participantes, provenientes de diversas áreas de trabajo – administración, práctica de archivos, estudiantes de 18 instituciones del país – tuvieron la oportunidad de reunirse por primera vez e intercambiar informaciones sobre los acervos de sus instituciones y las condiciones de conservación de los mismos. Tanto las evaluaciones como el informe final de Francis Mwangi concluyeron que el encuentro fue bien recibido y resultó de utilidad para todos los participantes.

La FIAF School on Wheels en Nairobi, contribuyó a una mejor comprensión del estado de conservación de los elementos audiovisuales en Kenia, y del peligro de deterioración que corren debido a la falta de recursos humanos, equipos técnicos y condiciones de almacenamiento adecuados. El programa contribuyó asimismo a la concientización de los dirigentes de la importancia de la salvaguarda del acervo cultural de Kenia.

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# L'animation, cet objet bizarre

## Compte rendu du symposium «L'animation à travers le monde»

**Marco de Blois**

Marco de Blois: Programmateur-conservateur, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montréal

L'un des moments forts du 68<sup>ème</sup> congrès de la FIAF à Pékin, le symposium «L'animation à travers le monde» a permis de mieux connaître le travail des cinémathèques et archives dans le domaine du cinéma d'animation. Car malgré ses origines lointaines, bien qu'elle traverse l'histoire du cinéma depuis ses origines, et même qu'elle devance, selon certains, le cinématographe Lumière, l'animation reste aujourd'hui une discipline encore relativement obscure, plus complexe qu'il n'y paraît, réservant bon nombre de surprises et de découvertes.

Comme nous avons pu le constater lors de ces deux journées de conférences et d'échanges, l'animation possède des caractéristiques particulières de collection, d'archivage, de documentation et de mise en valeur. Il y a les films, certes, le plus souvent des courts métrages, mais aussi tous ces objets plus ou moins étranges (cellulos, appareils, documents de travail, etc.) qui peuvent souvent donner du fil à retordre aux conservateurs et archivistes. Au sein même de quelques institutions, le cinéma d'animation fait ainsi l'objet d'une attention spécialisée, certains membres du personnel y étant affectés. Le congrès de la FIAF a d'ailleurs été l'occasion pour ces professionnels d'échanger et, de ce fait, de se sentir moins seuls

dans leur spécialisation très pointue. (Pour ma part, j'assistais pour la première fois à un congrès de la FIAF, et ce séjour a été pour moi des plus bénéfiques.) Plus d'une vingtaine d'intervenants ont ainsi fait état de leurs efforts lors de ce symposium de deux jours structuré autour de trois thèmes : Collections des archives, Acquisition, conservation et restauration, et Utilisation et projection.

C'est à Hisashi Okajima, conservateur en chef et directeur du National Film Center de Tokyo, qu'est revenue la responsabilité d'inaugurer ce symposium. Dans son allocution, M. Okajima posait quatre questions qui anticipaient les interrogations et problématiques ayant travaillé ces deux jours de symposium. Ces questions, essentielles, sont :

1. Qu'est-ce que l'animation ?
2. Pouvons-nous décrire son histoire de façon juste et équitable ?
3. Pouvons-nous l'archiver adéquatement, et si oui, comment ?
4. Qu'y a-t-il d'unique dans la préservation du patrimoine de l'animation ?

La première question tend à susciter l'angoisse existentielle chez les spécialistes de cette discipline, tant l'animation est protéiforme et tend parfois à contredire l'idée que

nous nous en faisons. Si une réponse précise et concluante n'a pas été donnée – de toute manière, là n'était pas l'objectif du symposium –, il reste que le spectre de ce que peut être l'animation a été défini grâce aux allocutions qui touchaient à quelques-unes de ses techniques emblématiques (dessins animés, marionnettes, dessin sur pellicule, etc.) et à certains genres (du cartoon au film expérimental abstrait). L'intervention de Julien Faraut, responsable du Fonds de film à l'iconothèque de l'INSEP (Institut national du sport, de l'expertise et de la performance) de Paris, a pour sa part ouvert une voie de traverse, présentant un intéressant travail de reconstitution du « phonoscope », un appareil inventé en 1892 par le Français Georges Demeny permettant d'animer des images photographiques. Comme l'indique M. Faraut, l'appareil se situe entre le praxinoscope d'Émile Reynaud et le cinématographe Lumière. Cette vampirisation de la prise de vues réelles par l'image par image annonce une réalité bien contemporaine.

Pour écrire l'histoire de l'animation de façon équitable et juste, encore faut-il compter sur le travail des archives et des cinémathèques du monde entier. Nos collègues et hôtes chinois ont ainsi dépeint les activités du China Film Archive dans ce domaine, d'abord à travers une présentation générale de Sun Xianghui, directrice adjointe du CFA, ensuite avec quelques cas plus ciblés : collection et catalogage du cinéma d'animation chinois des premiers temps par Zhu Tianwei ; collection et préservation des archives de Qian Jiajun, l'un des plus célèbres animateurs chinois, par Li Zhen ; recherches textuelles et restauration de films d'animation chinois anciens par Huang Dequan, Zuo Ying et Yang Xiaokang. Toujours dans le domaine de l'animation chinoise, la Française Marie-Claire Kuo-Quiquemelle est intervenue sur la collection de 100 films d'animation chinois du Centre de documentation sur le cinéma chinois à Paris. Il est intéressant de noter que cette intervention a été la seule à porter sur une collection étrangère, née d'un désir évident de faire connaître une portion méconnue de la cinématographie chinoise en France.

Par ailleurs, certains pans de l'histoire et du patrimoine mondiaux de l'animation ont été exposés à travers des interventions por-



Stefan Drössler (Filmmuseum München) présente le travail du peintre et graphiste Walter Ruttmann

tant sur un auteur ou un corpus national et de la place qu'occupe ceux-ci au sein de leurs archives ou cinémathèques respectives : film de marionnettes slovène (Igor Prassel, Slovenska Kinoteka, Ljubljana), « record talkies » japonais (Akira Tochigi, National Film Center, Tokyo), animation belge (Victor De Vocht, Cinémathèque royale de Belgique, Bruxelles), ou encore l'œuvre de Lotte Reiniger (Bernd Desinger, Filmmuseum Düsseldorf), Walter Ruttmann (Stefan Drössler, Filmmuseum München), Noburo Ofuji (Hidenori Okada, National Film Center, Tokyo), Émile Reynaud (Jean-Baptiste Garnero, Archives françaises du film-CNC, Paris), les Frères Frenkel (Éric Le Roy, Archives françaises du film-CNC), Ivo Caprino (Ove Solum, University of Oslo/The National Library of Norway), John Halas et Joy Batchelor (Jez Stewart, BFI, Londres), Julian Józef Antonisz (Tadeusz Kowalski et Elzbieta Wysocka), Gordon Webber (Marco de Blois, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montréal). Cette énumération ne tient pas compte des approches diversifiées par lesquelles l'œuvre de ces auteurs a été abordée – parfois sous l'angle de l'histoire du cinéma, parfois sous celui des problématiques liées à l'archivage, au catalogage et à la restauration.

Cela nous amène à la troisième question de M. Okajima, qui a le mieux traduit les enjeux considérables nés de la volonté d'archiver l'animation. Car entre les dessins animés du couple Halas-Batchelor et les films abstraits de Walter



Ruttman, pour ne reprendre que ces exemples, il y a tout un monde autant technique qu'esthétique. En effet, l'animation a la particularité de laisser derrière elle des archives à la fois volumineuses et idiosyncrasiques – la collectionner et la sauvegarder demandent un savoir-faire et des ressources rares. Nous avons pu avoir un avant-goût de ces difficultés d'archivage lors de l'intervention de Françoise Lemerige et de Jacques Ayroles de la Cinémathèque française sur la préservation des dessins d'animation, dont les « celluloses », c'est-à-dire ces acétates peints servant à la réalisation des dessins animés. Un seul court métrage d'animation exige la fabrication de milliers de celluloses, lesquels ont la particularité de se dégrader rapidement sans soins appropriés et finissent le plus souvent dans des boîtes au fond des studios.

D'autres présentations nous ont permis de découvrir les improbables objets qui se cachent derrière la production d'œuvres d'animation et dont la sauvegarde et la restauration demandent de l'attention et beaucoup de recherche. C'est le cas, par exemple, des appareils inventés par le pionnier Émile Reynaud, du praxinoscope au Théâtre optique, dont l'ensemble de l'œuvre conçue au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle précède le cinématographe Lumière. Jean-Baptiste Garnero, des Archives françaises du film-CNC, s'intéresse de près à Reynaud et peut compter sur les recherches de la spécialiste Christelle Odoux, alors que le CNC documente et soutient une opération d'inscription de l'œuvre de Reynaud au registre Mémoire du monde de l'UNESCO à la demande de la famille. La compréhension de l'œuvre esthétique et technique de Reynaud repose ici sur les efforts des cinémathèques et archives de même que sur l'apport de chercheurs indépendants.

Un autre « bricoleur » a été le Polonais Julian Józef Antonisz (1941-1987), auteur de films dessinés sur pellicule. Elzbieta Wysocka de la Cinémathèque nationale polonaise a introduit les congressistes à l'œuvre de ce réalisateur hors-norme et a décrit les appareils mis au point par le cinéaste pour la conception de ses films. Ces appareils sont en fait des pantographes par lesquels le cinéaste pouvait reproduire sur des photogrammes 35mm des dessins réalisés sur grande surface. Autant l'archivage et la restauration



Marco de Blois présente "Hand painted film" de Gordon Webber, restauré par la Cinémathèque québécoise (Montréal)

des positifs originaux de films peints ou dessinés sont un défi pour les conservateurs et les restaurateurs, autant la compréhension des objets eux-mêmes demande des connaissances débordant du champ strict de la cinématographie. Rattaché au Studio d'animation de Cracovie, Antonisz avait la particularité de revendiquer farouchement son indépendance d'artiste à l'époque où l'État exerçait un contrôle serré sur la production cinématographique et de déjouer la hiérarchie habituelle des éléments filmiques, n'hésitant pas par exemple à altérer les éléments d'origine pour remodeler les films à sa convenance.

Ces trois exemples forts illustrent de façon éloquente les difficultés que présente l'archivage de l'animation : les films, les documents de travail, les dispositifs. Nous aurions pu poursuivre la liste avec d'autres cas : les instruments de travail de l'animateur japonais Noburo Ofuji, la restauration des films abstraits de l'Allemand Walter Ruttmann ou d'un film expérimental inédit du Québécois Gordon Webber, la préservation de *Princess of Iron Fan*, premier long métrage d'animation chinois, la collection volumineuse du studio Halas et Batchelor. Ce qu'il faut retenir ici est que de grandes expertises se sont développées au sein des cinémathèques et archives car les défis sont nombreux.

La quatrième question de M. Okajima (« Qu'y a-t-il d'unique dans la préservation du patrimoine de l'animation ? ») trouve une

grande partie de ses réponses dans ce qui précède. Les archives sont volumineuses et atypiques et regorgent de cas d'espèce. Nous pourrions ajouter que le patrimoine de l'animation touche aussi bien à des genres cinématographiques bien établis (ainsi, la comédie) qu'aux arts modernes et contemporains. La recherche autour d'un film ou d'un corpus en vue d'une restauration, par exemple, exige une approche multidisciplinaire et, bien souvent, l'intervention de spécialistes comme des historiens de l'art. Nous avons également noté que l'animation fait l'objet d'une spécialisation croissante au sein de certaines cinémathèques et archives. D'ailleurs, le thème du symposium a incité des institutions à dépêcher à Pékin des membres du personnel qui n'assistent pas régulièrement aux congrès de la FIAF.

La question de la préservation ne saurait être posée sans tenir compte de l'accès et de la mise en valeur. La collection du Centre de documentation sur le cinéma chinois est en soi un exemple intéressant de diffusion. Il faut également mettre en évidence l'initiative de la UCLA Film & Television Archive, Silent Animation Digital Access Project, décrite par Mark Quigley, grâce à laquelle onze films d'animation muets et libres de droits, restaurés à partir des meilleurs éléments 35mm et 16mm existants, sont montrés en ligne et documentés à l'aide de textes et de commentaires audio sur la place de l'œuvre dans l'histoire de même que son état de conservation et le processus de restauration.

Pour la première fois de son existence, la FIAF invitait ses membres à se pencher sur l'animation dans le cadre de son symposium annuel. Les pays qui y étaient représentés ont un patrimoine animé imposant et d'une très grande influence historique. L'événement aura permis de raffermir et de développer le réseau tissé entre les spécialistes de l'animation œuvrant au sein des organisations membres de la FIAF. Il a également donné la mesure des défis entourant l'archivage de l'image par image, tout en soulignant l'importance, trop souvent sous-estimée, de l'animation dans l'histoire des images en mouvement. À ces deux journées de discussions s'est ajoutée une impressionnante programmation de 130 films d'animation prêtés par plusieurs

archives et cinémathèques. Réunir autant de chefs-d'œuvre et de films rares donnait à cette programmation un caractère exceptionnel. Réparties sur six soirées, les séances, nombreuses et riches, ont d'ailleurs obtenu du succès auprès du public chinois comme en témoignait l'enthousiasme des assistances.

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The "Animation Around the World" Symposium that took place during the 68th FIAF Congress in Beijing provided the occasion to appreciate the efforts of film archives in the fields of collecting, preserving, and showing animation. In his opening speech, the Chief Curator of the Tokyo National Film Centre, Mr. Hisashi Okajima, invited those attending the Congress to consider the nature of animation, to ask themselves what is special about it and how it should be archived properly. The lectures were about specific holdings pertaining to animation auteurs of historical importance and significant bodies of work. Accordingly, following Mr. Okajima's introduction, what came out of these two days of discussion is that animation has a fascinating history and that film archives have a role to play in filling the gaps. But, most importantly, the atypical nature of animation archives was revealed, and one can now better perceive the challenge of archiving it. For instance, the preservation of animation cels, hand-painted animation, or apparatus was discussed in some of the lectures. The Symposium also gave the chance to animation specialists working solitarily in FIAF film archives to meet and exchange ideas. This meeting in the capital of China has been beneficial for all of them.

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El simposio "La animación a través del mundo" ("Animation Around the World") permitió evaluar los esfuerzos de los archivos cinematográficos en materia de recolección, preservación, y exhibición películas de animación. En su discurso inaugural, el Sr. Hisashi Okajima, curador principal del Centro Nacional de la Cinematografía del Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno en Tokio, invitó a los participantes del Congreso a reflexionar sobre la naturaleza de la animación y a interrogarse sobre el carácter especial y único de este medio, y cómo conservarlo. Las ponencias se refirieron a fondos específicos, y a destacados autores en función de la importancia en cuanto a la importancia de su obra y de su significancia histórica. Siguiendo el camino que el Hisashi Okajima nos indicó en su introducción, quedó en evidencia, luego de dos días de discusiones, que la cinematografía de animación posee una historia fascinante y que los archivos cinematográficos desempeñan un papel determinante cuando se trata de llenar los vacíos existentes en la historia de este medio. Lo más importante, sin embargo, fue que se destacó el carácter atípico de los archivos de animación y del reto que representa su preservación. Por ejemplo, en algunas ponencias se discutió la especificidad de la preservación de celulosidos de animación, de la animación de pintura a mano, o de los diversos aparatos y dispositivos técnicos de animación. El simposio también ofreció a especialistas de la animación, que trabajan solitariamente en los archivos de la FIAF, de encontrarse e intercambiar ideas y de brindarles el apoyo que necesitan. La reunión organizada en la capital de China fue beneficiosa para todos.

# Silent Film Archaeology

Eileen Bowser

**Eileen Bowser:** Honorary member of FIAF and member of the Editorial Board, *Journal of Film Preservation* (New York)

The Library of Congress held a film identification workshop called "Silent Film Archaeology" at its Packard Campus in Culpeper, Virginia, 14-16 June 2012. The success of the event should commend the idea to other archives.

It is the rare archive that does not possess a number of films or film fragments that mystify its cataloguers, films that are missing their original titles. Solving these puzzles takes detective work, a part of every film cataloguer's job description. With the help of experts in various subject areas invited to participate, it is possible to accumulate a lot of useful information for identification purposes. If the original title is not to be found, at least information about the date of production, the location, the actors, etc., can be used as an aid to cataloguing the item and ensuring that it will be located when there is a search for relevant material.

People with a special interest in some aspect of film history are happy to be asked to participate in this detective work. The exercise is actually a lot of fun. While a few uninteresting films are sure to be viewed, one never knows when an exciting discovery may occur. Lost films may be found, as we know, on the archive's own shelves. Identification workshops are not a new concept within FIAF. In the late 1960s Ceskoslovensky Filmovy Ustav

held an identification workshop in Prague, inviting FIAF members to participate. In New York, the Museum of Modern Art held a slapstick identification workshop in connection with the Slapstick Symposium held as part of the 1985 FIAF Congress.

In Culpeper, about half of the films were identified on the spot, and additional identifications were made in the following weeks, as research continued with information gathered at the viewing. The Library of Congress itself supplied a large number of films to be identified, but others were lent by the Museum of Modern Art, George Eastman House, the EYE Film Institute in Amsterdam, the UCLA Film & Television Archive, the USC Hefner Archive, Lobster Films, and private collectors. A second layer of FIAF archives may also be credited with supplying these films, consisting of those archives around the world that had saved American silent films in the past and repatriated them to the American archives. The repatriated films are often missing main titles or have main titles changed for release in other countries, and therefore may be unidentified.

Nearly 100 films were looked at during the Silent Film Archaeology workshop. These were short films, or, rarely, an excerpt of a feature. Unusual for an identification workshop, skilled musicians accompanied these unknown films.

Phil Carli, Ben Model, and Andrew Simpson achieved a remarkable and sensitive task, performing with a lot of unidentified shorts, while the audience talked out loud. Yet it never felt like musician and spectator were in conflict. One of the unusual aspects of the identification workshop is that the spectators are supposed to interact with the screen and each other. Speaking out is encouraged.

The participants were about sixty enthusiastic historians, researchers, archivists, collectors, people who could recognize the actors, or the shooting location, or read car license plates. A large proportion of the films were slapstick comedies, and there were some great slapstick experts in the audience. Others could recognize the actors in silent Westerns, or the actors' gestures that revealed the film as Italian. Different areas of the auditorium held specialists of one kind or another, and shouts came from various corners. Some slipped out to consult a library cart that held useful references just outside the door; others used their laptops and smart phones to search the Internet. All these enthusiastic people came to Culpeper at their own expense, some from great distances. During the breaks, participants gathered over meals or in the lobby for lively discussions. A constantly changing display of motion picture stills spread out on a long table in the lobby spurred additional identifications.

The Library of Congress staff did an enormous lot of work preparing and presenting the workshop. Rob Stone, Moving Image Curator, and Rachel Parker, Curatorial Technician, were the coordinators. Rob chaired the sessions with a roving microphone. Rachel, together with participants Steve Massa and Brent Walker, acted as official note-takers, ready to accumulate all the information and prepare it for sharing. Films that were not identified during this workshop will have frame scans taken that will be uploaded to Flickr, the website of the Nitrate Committee within the Association of Moving Image Archivists. Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/people/nfig>, a site open to everyone, carries images of unidentified films and asks for help.

The Library of Congress hopes to continue the workshop in future years. Most film archives could benefit from the point of view of outreach to the public as well as the internal needs of cataloguing and research. Such workshops need not be as ambitious as this one. Even small ones, limited to one archive's holdings and a few viewers, would be found beneficial for most archives, and are highly recommended.

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La «Library of Congress» a organisé en juin 2012, sur le site du Packard Campus à Culpeper (Virginie), un atelier sur l'identification des films muets. Les archives d'autres pays d'Amérique ainsi que l'«EYE Film Institute» d'Amsterdam y ont participé en prêtant des films en vue de leur identification. Environ la moitié des films examinés durant la séance du week-end ont été identifiés par le groupe des experts, historiens, archivistes et autres spécialistes réunis à Culpeper pour l'occasion. Cet atelier fut considéré comme une grande réussite, et pourrait servir de modèle à des initiatives similaires dans d'autres archives de la FIAF. Les ateliers sur le thème de l'identification sont bénéfiques à plus d'un titre: ils sont utiles pour les tâches de catalogage, et ils contribuent en même temps au programme de sensibilisation des archives à cette thématique.

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La Librería del Congreso organizó un taller de identificación de películas mudas en su Campus en Culpeper, Virginia, en junio 2012. Los otros archivos Estadounidenses y el EYE Film Institute de Amsterdam participaron suministrando películas de sus colecciones para su identificación. Aproximadamente la mitad de las películas examinadas durante las sesiones de un fin de semana fueron identificadas por el grupo de expertos, historiadores, archivistas, y otros especialistas reunidos en Culpeper. Se consideró que el taller fue de gran interés, y que este tipo de taller es altamente recomendable para todo archivo que desee identificar elementos de sus colecciones. Los talleres de identificación ofrecen más de una ventaja: son útiles para la tarea de catalogación de los archivos, y al mismo tiempo contribuyen a sus programas externos de exhibición.

# History



*L'Obsession du souvenir* (1913, Gaumont, France) : Suzanne Grandais





*Fior di male* (1915, Cines, Italy, dir. Carmine Gallone): the dramatic climax with Lyda Borelli

# The Impact of the Desmet Collection. Pordenone and Beyond

Ivo Blom

**Ivo Blom:** Lecturer, Department of Comparative Arts & Media Studies, Faculty of Arts, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. Archivist and restorer at the Netherlands Filmmuseum (now EYE Film Institute), 1989-1994. His dissertation at the University of Amsterdam (2000) was published in 2003 as *Jean Desmet and the Early Dutch Film Trade*.

*Author's note: This essay is a reworked and updated version of an article previously published in Immagine (Rome: Associazione Italiana per le Ricerche di Storia del Cinema), no. 10/11, gennaio-agosto 2006, pp. 12-21, itself a shortened translated version of the closing chapter of my Dutch dissertation, Pionierswerk. Jean Desmet en de vroege Nederlandse filmhandel en bioscoopexploitatie [Pioneering Work. Jean Desmet and the Early Dutch Film Trade and Cinema Exploitation] (Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2000). My book Jean Desmet and the Early Dutch Film Trade (Amsterdam University Press, 2003) focuses on Desmet's own years, but for space reasons the history of the collection and its impact was largely absent.*

In 2011 the Desmet Collection of EYE Film Institute Netherlands (formerly known as the Netherlands Filmmuseum) was added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. For the first time in history UNESCO recognized a film collection as cultural heritage. This is reason enough to look back at this unique collection, its recent history as a collection within the Netherlands Filmmuseum, and its exposure at foreign festivals, primarily the Giornate del Cinema Muto in Pordenone, Italy.

The impact of the preservation and presentation of the Desmet Collection has been enormous. In contrast to many other film collections, the heritage of former Dutch film distributor Jean Desmet (1875-1956) contains not only a vast amount of films (some 900, mostly foreign), but also a huge publicity collection (including a unique poster collection), as well as Desmet's extensive business archive, itself a rich context for insights into the collection and into the field of film distribution, a missing link in historical research.

The film collection gives a clear cross-section of the fare on offer in the 1910s, while the remaining distribution copies often possess the original colouring, with tinting and toning. The business archive illuminates the transnational perspective of changing distribution policies, but is also highly informative about local programming. Over the past two decades, the Desmet Collection has impressed and actively influenced film historians, curators, festival programmers, and film-makers, and has also helped to shape recent film historiography, as well as our ideas about the value of collections. Festivals like the Giornate del Cinema Muto have played an important part in this development.

## THE DESMET AFFAIR

The 1989 edition of the Giornate del Cinema Muto has gone down in film history because of a row known as “the Desmet Affair”. In retrospect this may now seem a little event – a “storm in a glass of water”, as we say in Dutch – but at the time it was a story that hit the front pages of Dutch newspapers. Why?

The Filmmuseum, under the new management of Hoos Blotkamp (from 1987) and Eric de Kuyper (from 1988), was drastically opening up its vaults. In addition to the Desmet films, of which an index already existed, they discovered they had much more precious material to preserve, but they did not have enough funds to salvage every film.<sup>1</sup> The managers thus continued to fall back on existing arrangements with foreign archives to preserve the Desmet nitrates abroad, requesting a safety print in return.<sup>2</sup> Former interim-manager Frans Maks had inaugurated this practice in the mid-1980s, but the new management now also used the nitrates to trade; in some cases Desmet material was traded to fill lacunae (especially recognized “classics”) in the museum’s collection. This policy was quite according to FIAF procedures, although it was not without discussion. Only later would the Filmmuseum management realize that their presumed “weakness” was actually their strength. It possessed an internationally renowned position precisely because of its unusual collection of non-canonical titles, while a number of the desired canonical “classics” were freely available on the foreign film trade market. Exchanging rare originals from the Desmet Collection against relatively easily acquirable

duplicates provoked the ire of film historians and caused the so-called “Desmet Affair” to explode at the 1989 Giornate del Cinema Muto.

Karel Dibbets, the Museum’s only board member who was a film historian, could not agree with the preservation and exchange plans of the management, and left the board. Together with other Dutch film historians such as Egbert Barten, Geoffrey Donaldson, and Eric van ‘t Groenewout, he signed a petition in Pordenone against the presumed intention of the management to let the Desmet collection fall apart. The protest was spread at the Giornate, and the Dutch and foreign press instantly reacted. It even made the front page in the Dutch quality newspaper *NRC*. The Museum initially defended itself with FIAF policies and spread a counter-protest in the lobby at Pordenone. As neither the film historians nor the Filmmuseum management gave exact figures and correct information at the beginning of this conflict, rumours kept circulating for a long time. Questions such as these remained unanswered: What is the value of a collection? How representative is the collection? Which titles went abroad, and where? Why did nobody react before 1989 (when many film titles had already disappeared from the collection)? What is the Museum’s policy on collections and collecting? Personal attacks by film historians, Filmmuseum management, and the Dutch film journal *Skrien* clouded the debate even more.

The discussion continued in *Skrien* until Summer 1990, even if the Filmmuseum had already supplied detailed information in its annual report for 1989. Additional information was delivered in a letter from the Museum printed in *Skrien* in its April-May 1990 issue: after repeating the FIAF codes, the management added that, whenever no safety copy was returned for the offered nitrate print involved in the “exchange”, a safety print could always be requested at a later stage. Of course the whereabouts of the nitrate print would always be known; it had not disappeared. An exchange with Danish Desmet films in the 1970s, however, had proven the risks in relying too much on this policy, even if the responsibility for this affair lay with the former Filmmuseum management and the Danish archive, and very few people knew

1. Memorable non-Desmet titles from the Filmmuseum at the Giornate during this period were Lubitsch’s *Meyer aus Berlin* (1919) and Frank Borzage’s *Lucky Star* (1929), screened in 1990 and triggering the Borzage programme there the following year; in 1991, Lois Weber’s *Shoes* (1916), Alfred Machin’s *Maudite soit la guerre* (1914), and Cecil B. DeMille’s *Saturday Night* (1922); and in 1992, Disney’s silent *Alice* shorts. From the early 1990s onward, the exhibition of the Filmmuseum’s newest finds and restorations shifted to the Cinema Ritrovato festival in Bologna, apart from the Mutoscope & Biograph presentation at Pordenone in 2000. For years, the Filmmuseum was also a programming partner of the Bologna festival.
2. In the 1980s and 1990s 25 films were preserved in the U.S., 25 in Germany, 2 in Denmark, and 2 in Italy. Compared to the hundreds of prints preserved in the Netherlands, this is a small number, but they played an important part in the exposure of the Dutch collection and in sustaining the Filmmuseum’s application for funding from the Dutch government.



Poster for *Fior di male* (1915, Cines, Italy, dir. Carmine Gallone), starring Lyda Borelli

about it.<sup>3</sup> Reviewing the number of nitrate films sent abroad by Blotkamp and De Kuyper without receiving a safety print, we can conclude that the Desmet Affair was more a protest against an intention than against a consistent practice. The tide changed in 1990 when the Filmmuseum heard that it would receive a grant for 2.7 million guilders per year until 1994 for a huge preservation project. Preservation abroad was no longer necessary: the Filmmuseum would preserve all waiting Dutch Desmet nitrates, and requested the return of nitrate elements that had been

sent away to foreign archives so that they could now be preserved in colour and with newest methods.<sup>4</sup> In the early 1990s the Filmmuseum sent weekly shipments of kilometres of celluloid to the Dutch film laboratory Haghefilm, which became a leader in the preservation of shrunken and coloured nitrate films. However, without this enormous extra government subsidy (nicknamed “the Armada”), and without the fast-growing expertise of the Filmmuseum and Haghefilm in the field of preservation, the story could have turned out quite differently.<sup>5</sup>

3. In 1973-74 the Filmmuseum’s managing director Jan de Vaal sent 32 Danish films from the Desmet Collection to Denmark to have them researched and preserved there, but nothing except two 16mm copies came back. Former Danish curator Ib Monty stated in 1987 that the nitrates were exchanged, but it is unclear what they were exchanged for. (Filmmuseum Archive, letter from Ib Monty [Det Danske Filmmuseum] to Frans Maks, 26 May 1987) Monty claimed to Maks to have made 35mm black-and-white negatives and positives from all the prints that had been sent, but De Vaal did not receive any copies from these, apart from the two aforementioned 16mm prints. Monty wrote that in 1978 15 Danish Desmet nitrates had had to be destroyed because of decay. Was the quality of the Danish Desmet films so poor that half of them decayed within a few years? When in the early 1990s new Filmmuseum manager Hoos Blotkamp wanted to have the nitrates back in order to preserve them in colour, only 12 of the 32 films previously sent were returned. It is also worrying that both De Vaal and Monty mixed things up in their correspondence. Monty mentions four destroyed films that were not on De Vaal’s list of the films that had been sent.

4. The nitrates printed by MoMA and the AFI were not requested to be returned. They have been preserved in the U.S., mostly in black-and-white, while four were preserved in colour at Haghefilm.

5. *NRC*, 21 October 1989, front page; *NRC*, 23 and 26 October 1989; *Parool*, 23 and 30 October 1989; *Trouw*, 25 October 1989. For *Skrien*, see Michel Hommel’s editorial, “Desmet”, *Skrien* 169, December-January 1989-90, p. 4; the reaction by Karel Dibbets, *Skrien* 170, February-March 1990, pp. 5-6; an interview in the same number with Michel Hommel and Peter Delpout (then assistant curator at the Filmmuseum): “Bestand in beweging (8). Tot slot: twee visies op conservering” [Archive in Motion. Conclusion: Two Views on Film Preservation], pp. 64-67; two letters to the editor by Geoffrey Donaldson, the reaction by editor Michel Hommel, and a letter by the Museum management, all in *Skrien* 171, April-May 1990, pp. 5-6; and the reaction to Hommel’s comment by Donaldson in *Skrien* 172, June-July 1990, pp. 56-57. See also the Filmmuseum’s 1989 annual report. The change in focus at the Filmmuseum from the films of the Desmet Collection to silent cinema in general caused the management to stop appointing a separate Desmet curator in 1990.



## THE EYE-OPENER OF *FIOR DI MALE*

In 1986, the Italian *diva* film *Fior di male* (Cines, 1915), a heart-breaking melodrama starring Lyda Borelli, was shown at the Giornate del Cinema Muto in Pordenone. It was a revelation. Paolo Cherchi Usai, one of the festival's organizers and now Senior Curator of Motion Pictures at George Eastman House in Rochester and Director of its L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation, recalls the event:

It was a declaration of war against the assumption that Italian cinema of the silent period was a known entity. It was the proof that much, much more could be seen and told about it. It was an indictment of the false representation and false consciousness of film history as a crystallized set of periodizations. [...] It was nice to see the variety in the reaction of the audience: from sheer enthusiasm, to dismay for all the time we have lost following the ideology of the "great work", to the diffidence and the sheer dismissal of those who certainly didn't want to have their theories and prejudices affected by the new evidence.<sup>6</sup>

The established "canon" of classic films and directors was sent into freefall by the screening of a film which until then had simply been ignored by film history. Historians of Italian cinema, who had thought that there were no further surprises in store, were compelled to take another look at both their discipline and its prevailing paradigms.

Historians and film archivists were also intrigued by the source of the film. For it turned out to be part of a private collection, consisting of almost 900 films, together with a rich publicity collection and a vast business archive, the heritage of Dutch film distributor and cinema owner Jean Desmet, which had made its way into the Netherlands Filmmuseum in Amsterdam. Besides *Fior di male*, the Dutch collection contained hundreds of films no longer available in their countries of origin, and often unseen anywhere since their original release. The presentation at Pordenone attracted the attention of European and American

curators, who came to the Netherlands to identify these films, and to select them for festivals and regular exhibition. The films in the Desmet Collection offered an excellent impression of the sheer abundance of films available for ordinary, everyday exhibition in the period between 1907 and 1916.

Festival screenings and retrospectives made an immediate impact, and the Desmet films played an important role in the rewriting of film history. They were of vital importance to dissertations and publications on early German and Italian cinema, forgotten or undervalued film companies such as Vitagraph and Éclair, early non-fiction films, genres such as the early Western, and early colour films.

## FIRST PRESENTATIONS

The Desmet Collection was donated to the Filmmuseum in 1957 by Desmet's daughter Jeanne Hughan-Desmet. From that time onwards, material from the collection has been shown via film screenings, exhibitions of posters and other objects, and by the use of clips in new films and television programmes. Until the mid-1980s, exhibition of the films was very modest and restricted to the Netherlands. The screenings were primarily of a nostalgic character, however, and the Desmet films were not highlighted as belonging to a comprehensive, vast, and outstanding collection. Outsiders barely knew of the Collection's size, richness, and uniqueness; preliminary lists with film titles were circulated only within FIAF circles.<sup>7</sup>

In the Autumn of 1957 Filmmuseum Director Jan de Vaal inserted a few short films from the newly-acquired Desmet Collection as the first course in his shows in the auditorium of Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum (Museum of Modern Art), then the Filmmuseum's home. Defying danger, inflammable nitrate films such as *Fior di male* were shown there until 1960.<sup>8</sup> Between 1961 and 1966, during the International Film Week in Arnhem, the precursor to today's

6. Paolo Cherchi Usai, letter to the author, 23 December 1995.

7. Film historian Geoffrey Donaldson, an expert on Dutch silent fiction film, only heard of the Desmet Collection in 1982, via foreign film historians. Geoffrey Donaldson, letter to the author, 26 June 1999.

8. See Filmmuseum Archive, lists of Nederlands Filmmuseum screenings, seasons 1957-58, 1958-59, 1959-60.



International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), 16mm versions of films by Desmet and his fair-ground colleagues Willy Mullens and Carmine Riozzi were shown in “Images Fantastiques”, an imitation travelling cinema whose decoration incorporated some of Riozzi’s original painted panels. In a way, these 16mm prints, comprising such titles as *Rosalie et son phono* (Pathé, 1911), *La Bergère d’Ivry* (Éclair, 1913), and *La nave dei leoni* (Ambrosio, 1912), were the first Desmet “restorations”. In the 1970s a series of exhibitions prominently featured Desmet film posters. One of the most important of these was held during the Arnhem Film Week of 1975, which was dedicated to the early years of cinema. Entitled “Hartroerend! Sensationeel! Humoristisch!” (“Heartbreaking! Sensational! Funny!”), it displayed not only posters, programmes, and photos from the Desmet Collection, but some Desmet films were projected as well, copied to safety material for the occasion.<sup>9</sup>

Intensive showing of the Desmet Collection began only from the mid-1980s, however, under the management of interim-manager Frans Maks and the specially appointed Desmet curator Frank van der Maden, who was responsible for the first comprehensive index of the Collection’s films and related material. In November 1985 the Filmmuseum showed six programmes of Desmet films; this would prove a turning-point in the Collection’s history. These were mainly films preserved abroad, in Germany and the United States, such as *Hochspannung* (Messter, 1913) and *A Romance of the Cliff Dwellers* (Edison, 1911), because the Filmmuseum itself had hardly restored any of the Desmet films up till then. The films were shown with live piano accompaniment; this was very unusual for the Filmmuseum at that time, although live accompaniment for silent films would eventually become standard procedure at the Filmmuseum. The film shows

were also accompanied by an exhibition in the museum’s lobby featuring posters, photos, documentation, and curiosities from the Desmet Collection. Frank van der Maden produced a special brochure for this exhibition, whose title used one of Desmet’s own slogans, *Interessant voor volwassenen, leerzaam voor kinderen. Aspecten van de vroege film* (Interesting for Adults, Educational for Children. Aspects of Early Cinema). The foreign preservation of the films for these shows would have historic importance, as would the attention this exhibition received from both the press and audiences. The application for funding the large-scale preservation of the Desmet films was sent in to the Dutch State soon afterwards.<sup>10</sup>

#### DESMET AT THE GIORNATE. AWARENESS AND RECOGNITION OF A COLLECTION

From 1985 onwards, the Desmet films were also shown abroad. The first place was at the Giornate del Cinema Muto, where the collection received its international launch. The Giornate, started in 1982, is the only festival fully dedicated to silent cinema, and unites film scholars, archivists, journalists, filmmakers, and cinephiles. By showing two black-and-white 16mm prints from the Desmet Collection, *Kri Kri ama la tintora* (Cines, 1913) and *Kri Kri imita Pegoud* (Cines, 1914), and meeting Karel Dibbets at the 1985 festival, the organizers became intrigued by this collection. Contacts were established with the Filmmuseum, in particular with Desmet curator Frank van der Maden. One year later, as described above, the Italian *diva* film *Fior di male* was screened, based on a unique copy, which was one of the first colour preservations by the Filmmuseum.

The reputation of the Desmet Collection was sealed a year after the showing of *Fior di male* when preserved colour prints of several Vitagraph movies were screened as part of the Giornate’s Vitagraph retrospective. Curiously enough, the 16 Vitagraph films from the Desmet Collection impressed people more than the quite larger

9. Sources about “Images Fantastiques”: interview with Jan de Vaal, 8 November 1995, and interview with former Filmmuseum employee Henk de Smidt, 20 November 1995, Filmmuseum annual reports, 1960–66. See also Ilse Hughan Archive, letter from Jan de Vaal to Jeanne Hughan-Desmet, 25 July 1961. Desmet posters were displayed in 1970–71 at a poster exhibition by the Filmmuseum at the VARA television studios in Hilversum, in 1972 in the Cinema Parisien at a programme of old Dutch features, and in 1974 at an all-Desmet poster exhibition at the BUMA House, on the occasion of BUMA’s 60th anniversary. See the Filmmuseum’s annual reports for 1970, 1972, 1974, and 1975–77. The Filmmuseum issued no annual reports in the years 1981–1983, so there is no information for that period.

10. Frank van der Maden, *Interessant voor volwassenen, leerzaam voor kinderen. Aspecten van de vroege film* [Interesting for Adults, Educational for Children. Aspects of Early Cinema], 1985. See also *Filmmuseum Cinematheek Journaal 71*, November 1985, pp. 16–46, and reactions in the Dutch press, such as the daily *Het Parool*, 20 November 1985.



Poster for *La Tutela* (1913, Ambrosio, Italy, dir. Baldassarre Negroni) at Desmet's Rotterdam Cinema Parisien, 1913

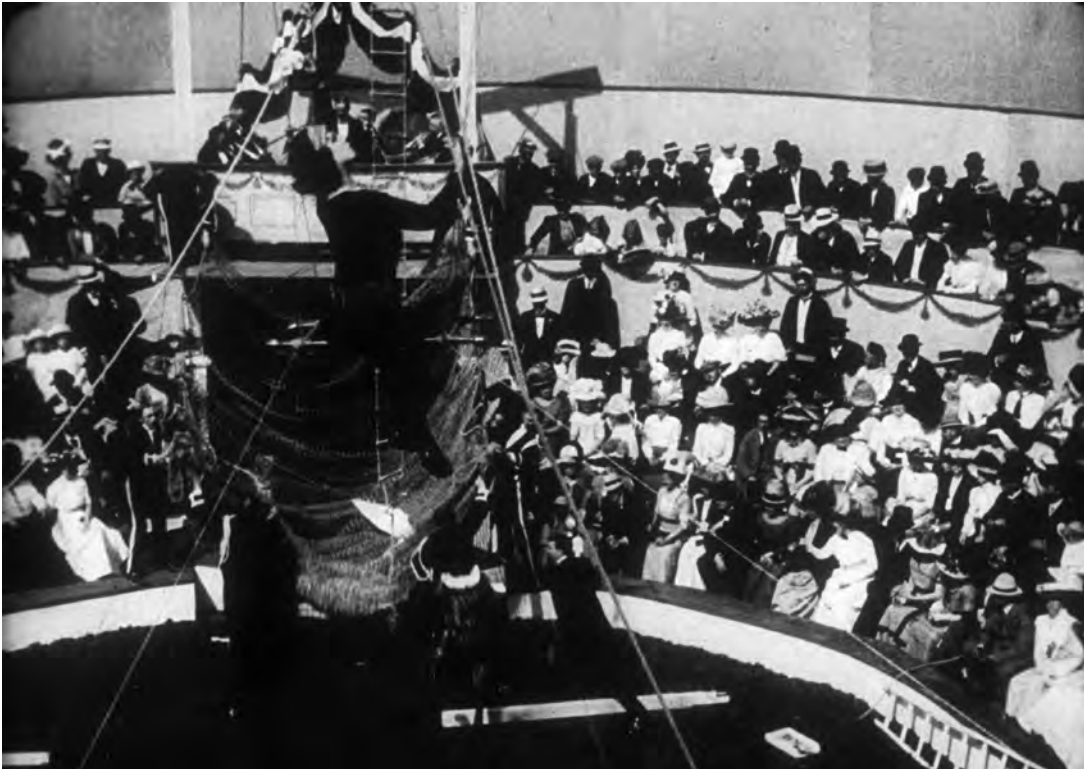
share of Vitagraph prints from the National Film Archive (now the BFI National Archive, London). Eileen Bowser, formerly film curator at New York's Museum of Modern Art, recalls:

The first really large showing was at Pordenone in 1987, and luckily I was present for that. It was a great occasion: the quality of the prints was high. This collection of course had a special value because it is from a period when so few films survived, and suddenly gaps began to fill up. It was not until Pordenone that I began to realize what an incredible and wonderful collection the Desmet is. [...] We certainly began to have a new idea of the importance of the Vitagraph production after the Desmet Collection began to become accessible. Only a small number of Vitagraphs were available in the United States prior to that.<sup>11</sup>

11. Eileen Bowser, letter to the author, 6 December 1995. Cf. also the Pordenone programme for 1987; Paolo Cherchi Usai, ed., *The Vitagraph Co. of America* (Pordenone: Studio Tesi, 1987); Michel Hommel, "Pordenone VI: er is meer dan Griffith" [Pordenone VI: There is more than Griffith], *Skrien* 157, Winter 1987-88, p. 44.

*Fior di male* was a damning commentary on the obsolescence of the film canon, and spearheaded the international discovery of the Desmet Collection. The quality of the print restoration was also praised. It showed that a silent film did not have to be a greying black-and-white copy, riddled with tramlines, "rain", and scratches, and printed on sound-film stock. It could be a composition of luminous and stable images: an artefact alive with colour, whether tinted, dye-toned, or hand- or stencil-coloured. Colour films were evidently not a rarity. Indeed, it has been estimated that about 80% of the European films produced in the 1910s were colour-processed in one way or another.<sup>12</sup> The archival practice of transferring old nitrate films onto black-and-white acetate film stock gave rise to a film history in black-and-white that bore little resemblance to how the films were shown in their original context. Paolo Cherchi Usai: "A major step forward was made in order to make these prints visible a little closer to their nitrate-like, tinted and toned

12. Colour proved to be genre-related (colour for drama, b&w for short farces and newsreel images), while companies used fixed colours for their intertitles to brand themselves (e.g., Pathé red, Gaumont green).



*De fire djaevle / The Four Devils* (1911), Danish circus film

and stencil-coloured condition.”<sup>13</sup> And in the words of Peter Delpout, filmmaker and former curator of the Filmmuseum:

It was not until I got to know the Desmet Collection at the Netherlands Filmmuseum that I realized just how much colour had been used in silent movies, and also just how much film archives and film historians across the world had ignored this fact. At a recent [1987] festival of silent movies in Pordenone about 300 movies were screened. Only ten were in colour, of which no fewer than eight appeared by courtesy of the conservation project of the Desmet Collection at the Netherlands Filmmuseum.<sup>14</sup>

*Fior di male* was one of the first films to undergo colour restoration at the Filmmuseum. The Desmet Collection was a credit to the Filmmuseum’s expertise – in collaboration with Haghefilm Laboratories – in the preservation of deteriorated nitrate and colour films. In 1991 it won them the Jean Mitry Award, the Giornate’s prestigious annual award, which the Filmmuseum shared that year with Haghefilm. The projection of the Filmmuseum’s coloured prints had widespread effects. In subsequent years, they would be shown regularly at the Giornate, and other archives, such as the Cinémathèque Royale [now Cinematek] of Brussels, the Cineteca Comunale di Bologna [now the Cineteca di Bologna], and George Eastman House of Rochester would also specialize in colour restoration of silent cinema.

Finally, people became aware of the importance of the Desmet Collection as a collection. Cherchi Usai: “That is, as a corpus, with its own history, life, and patterns of making, unmaking, exploitation, survival, re-discovery, and new archival and scholarly use. [...] The films of the Desmet Collection were a healthy reminder that films do not exist in

13. Paolo Cherchi Usai, letter to the author, 23 December 1995.  
 14. Peter Delpout, “Niet alle zwiigende nachten zijn zwart. Een ander licht op de geschiedenis van de zwiigende film” [Not All Nights Are Black. Another Light on the History of Silent Cinema], in *Skrien* 157, Winter 1987-88, pp. 56-59. The aspect of colour was also emphasized in the brochure produced for the 1986 Pordenone festival. See Frank van der Maden and Emmy de Groot, *The Netherlands Filmmuseum Presents: The Desmet Collection* (Amsterdam: Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1986).

a void, but are 'made' constantly, after they are shot, printed and shown."<sup>15</sup> The appreciation of this collection by scholars was also a catalyst for scientific interest in other collections, such as the Joye Collection at London's National Film & Television Archive. "The Joye Collection, for example, had existed a long time before, yet the field started to care about it only after (and because of) what had happened with the Desmet Collection."<sup>16</sup>

Within this context Swiss film historian Roland Cosandey, an expert on the Joye Collection, proposes a distinction between the terms *repository* and *collection*. A "repository" indicates the social origins of a group of objects, but this does not necessarily qualify it as a museum collection. It is only when we recognize a repository of objects as comprising a self-contained whole with an individual history and a specific context that it becomes a collection. "The point of talking about collections is that we accept that objects have a context and a social history."<sup>17</sup> On the face of it, the Desmet films all appear to be part of a distribution collection, the stock-in-trade of a Dutch film distributor and cinema owner. The films themselves inform us of this. Unlike the original negative of a film, a distribution copy represents the final assembly of the print: the way it looks after it has been provided with intertitles or passed through tinting or colour-stencilling processes. National or local censorship may also account for variations between copies, along with other editorial interventions. The film-history community started to realize that variant editions of a film have a right to exist, and that these rights should be reflected in the preservation policies of film archives. It is the individual character of the Desmet Collection that makes it a genuine treasure trove. When reviewing Desmet's distribution copies, we get a composite idea of the films people were seeing in Dutch cinemas in the years surrounding the First World War.<sup>18</sup>

## EXPLORATION OF THE COLLECTION AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Intrigued by the first results, Giornate organizer Cherchi Usai visited the Filmmuseum archive at Overveen in 1986 and watched part of the nitrate stock in the Desmet Collection.

It is funny and revealing to see how many of us are taking the Desmet Collection for granted, as if it had always existed. But I remember very well what I had seen when [Filmmuseum manager] Frans Maks let me open for the first time several cans of films, what beautiful colours were there, how many rotten and decomposed reels of nitrate came under my eyes, and how uncertain he was, when I told him that the Desmet Collection could become a starting point in a new era of film culture.<sup>19</sup>

After Cherchi Usai's first visit, many would follow, resulting in numerous subsequent showings of the Desmet films, and even films preserved from the collection on request by the Giornate. Large portions of Desmet films were projected within Pordenone's themed programmes in 1987 (the aforementioned Vitagraph retrospective, plus some 5 Italian films, including *L'amazzone mascherata*, Celio, 1914), and they were omnipresent especially in 1990 (early German cinema), 1992 (Éclair), and 1993 (films from 1913). Added to this, several Desmet films were shown at the Giornate in the late 1980s for identification.<sup>20</sup> At the 1987 festival a special meeting was organized around the Desmet Collection. Half a year later, the Filmmuseum organized its own

15. Paolo Cherchi Usai, letter to the author, 23 December 1995.

16. Idem.

17. Roland Cosandey, letter to the author, 7 July 1999

18. As Desmet bought complete film programmes in Germany during the years 1910-1912, his collection also reflects the films on offer on German screens in those years.

19. Paolo Cherchi Usai, letter to the author, 23 December 1995. In the end the rot was less than expected. Less than 10 complete films out of the ca. 900 films were lost to nitrate decomposition, in the Netherlands at least. Fifteen Danish Desmet films were destroyed at the Danish film archive because of decomposition, which represented a big loss in terms of the Desmet Collection's Danish holdings.

20. Filmmuseum annual reports, 1990-1994; Giornate del Cinema Muto (Pordenone), programmes, 1987-1993; Paolo Cherchi Usai, "Op avontuur in de Desmet-collectie. Een sentimentele (en strategische) reis naar het Nederlands Filmmuseum" [Adventure into the Desmet Collection. A Sentimental (and Strategic) Trip to the Netherlands Filmmuseum], *Skrien* 152, 1986, pp. 40-41. After his first visit to the Netherlands, Cherchi Usai's ideas on film restoration were spread in the Dutch journal *Versus*: "Geschiedenis en esthetiek van de 'originele kopie'" [History and Aesthetics of the "Original" Copy], *Versus* 1, 1987, pp. 75-105. See also Paolo Cherchi Usai, "Jean Desmet e i manager del restauro", in *Segnocinema* 27, marzo 1987, pp. 58-59.



programme around the Giornate, with, e.g., British and Dutch prints of the Vitagraph films shown in Pordenone.<sup>21</sup>

The presentation in Pordenone drew the attention of curators, film historians, and festival organizers, and the Filmmuseum built up a network of contacts via the festival. Many came to the Netherlands in order to identify films or to select them for their festivals or regular screenings: the Cineteca di Bologna, with their festival *Il Cinema Ritrovato*; the Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema at Pesaro; the French festival *CinéMémoire*; the Musée d'Orsay in Paris; the Cinémathèque française; the Cinémathèque Gaumont; and the Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde, in Frankfurt. In 1991, Bologna, for instance, organized a large retrospective of early Italian cinema ("*Sperduti nel buio*"), in which 30 films from the Desmet Collection were shown.

Film historian Vittorio Martinelli: "What a sensation when I saw *Fior di male* and *Sangue bleu* for the first time! I had not seen those actresses [Lyda Borelli and Francesca Bertini] so beautiful."<sup>22</sup> Allured by the projections of the films from the Desmet Collection at the Giornate del Cinema Muto, Martinelli, together with the staff of the Turin film archive, visited the film archive of the Filmmuseum in Overveen, in order to identify the early Italian films there. He was flabbergasted:

The first film I remember seeing was a German version, entitled *Die Rache einer betrogenen Frau*. A beautiful film, nice colours, nice print. A film I immediately identified as *Sogno di un tramonto d'autunno*, based on D'Annunzio. I was exhilarated about this. Finding a film based on D'Annunzio which no longer existed in Italy, a magnificent print, and the knowledge that over a hundred more prints were

available. Wasn't this a treasure trove? What would the rest be like, if the first was already like this? [...] For the Amsterdam film archive the Desmet Collection became a spectacular calling card. In no other country can one research or organize anything without taking into account the Amsterdam holdings. A visit to Amsterdam is simply obligatory.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to early Italian cinema history, the Desmet Collection also played an essential part in the rewriting of early German film history. An impressive 1994-95 retrospective of the German pioneer Oskar Messter at Filmmuseum Potsdam and the Deutsches Museum München also contained many Desmet films. As far as can be ascertained internationally, the Desmet Collection contains the greatest number of Messter films that the now remain: 22 titles. Among these are some remarkable early examples of films with Henny Porten, the model woman of Wilhelmine Germany. Martin Loiperdinger, the organizer of the exhibition and retrospective, first encountered the Messter films during a large retrospective of early German cinema in Pordenone ("*Prima di Caligari*" / "*Before Caligari*", 1990), where a large percentage of the films projected were Desmet prints.<sup>24</sup> Through contact with the Desmet Collection, people discovered that beyond this collection the Netherlands Filmmuseum was also a treasure trove for early cinema in general, as well as an expert in colour preservation and a leader in the acquisition of financing and adequate staff in order to realize this preservation. For foreign festivals, archives, and scholars, this provided even more reasons for visiting the Dutch archive.<sup>25</sup>

Researchers Heide Schlüpmann and Richard Abel respectively studied the German and French collections of the Filmmuseum, including the Desmet films, for their groundbreaking studies on early German and French cinema, *Die Unheimlichkeit des Blicks* (1990)

21. Goed geconserveerd. [Well preserved] *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto 1987. Filmmuseum Cinematheek journal* 81, February-March 1987. In "Spreek is zilver, zwijgen is goud" [Speech Is Silver, Silence Is Golden], on pp. 17-19, Frank van der Maden talks about the 1987 edition of the Giornate. In reviews of the programmes on Vitagraph, Italian cinema, and Roscoe Arbuckle, he mentions the Desmet films shown, such as *L'amazzone mascherata* (1914) and *Out West* (1918). In the same publication, Haghefilm employee Wim Kerkhof talks about the restoration and showing of films like *Fior di male*, restored by Haghefilm: "Het laboratorium in Pordenone: Haghefilm BV", pp. 22-23.

22. Interview with Vittorio Martinelli, 7 July 1999.

23. Idem.

24. Interview with Martin Loiperdinger, 7 July 1999. See also Martin Loiperdinger's article, "Erhaltene Spielfilme aus der Messter-Produktion, 1909-1918", in *KINtop* 3 (1994), pp. 209-214.

25. See *KINtop* 3 (1994), and *Oskar Messter-Filmpionier der Kaiserzeit. KINtop Schriften* 2 (1994). For the Italian films in Bologna, see my text "Jean Desmet, distributore dei primi film italiani", in *Sperduti nel buio. Il cinema muto italiano e il suo tempo 1905-1930* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1991), pp. 140-158.





*Die Verräterin* (1911, Germany, dir. Urban Gad): Asta Nielsen



*A Vitagraph Romance* (1912, US, dir. James Young)

and *The Ciné Goes to Town* (1994).<sup>26</sup> The Desmet films played an important part in their texts. The early German films at the Filmmuseum, both within and outside the Desmet Collection, also were pivotal to the research of German film historian Michael Wedel, and for the volume *A Second Life. German Cinema's First Decade* (1996), edited by Thomas Elsaesser and Wedel. The German Desmet films formed the centre of a 1995 international touring show, "Rot für Gefahr, Feuer und Liebe" ("Red for Danger, Fire and Love"), organized by the Goethe Institut, also presented in Rome.<sup>27</sup>

Films and publicity materials within the Desmet Collection were also of vital importance to the realization of reference volumes such as Vittorio Martinelli and Aldo Bernardini's *Il cinema muto italiano* (1992-1996).<sup>28</sup> Martinelli:

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26. Richard Abel, *The Ciné Goes to Town* (1994); Heide Schlüpmann, *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks. Das Drama des frühen deutschen Kinos* (Basel/Frankfurt-am-Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1990). For her book, Heide Schlüpmann's work was based mainly on prints from preserved German Desmet films at German film archives which had acquired or restored them in the past. She first came to Holland to see the unique tinted print of *Padre* (Itala, 1912). After that she returned to view early German films at the archive in Overveen, where she discovered the German filmmakers Franz Hofer and Emerich Hanus. Heide Schlüpmann, letter to the author, 7 July 1999.
27. Daniela Sannwald, *Rot für Gefahr, Feuer und Liebe. Frühe deutsche Spielfilme / Red for Danger, Fire and Love. Early German Silent Films* (Berlin/München: Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek / Goethe Institut, 1995). On the occasion of a round table at the Rome edition of the programme, I published the article "Il primo cinema tedesco nella collezione Desmet", *Nuovo Cinecritica* 2/3, April-September 1996, pp. 129-133. Michael Wedel, "Kino-Dramen", *Narrative and Space in Early German Feature Films 1912-1919* (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam 1993; MA thesis). Thomas Elsaesser, Michael Wedel, eds., *A Second Life. German Cinema's First Decades* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996); see also Thomas Elsaesser, Michael Wedel, eds., *Kino der Kaiserzeit. Genres, Stars, formale Entwicklungen* (Berlin: Potemkin Press, 1999). In the book *A Second Life*, Desmet films served as the main source for articles by Kristin Thompson (*Die Landstrasse*, 1913), Michael Wedel (*Zweimal gelebt*, 1912), Yuri Tsvivan (*Die schwarze Kugel*, 1913), Elena Dagrada (*Die schwarze Kugel* and *Die schwarze Natter*, both 1913), and myself (*Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*, 1912, and *Auf einsamer Insel*, 1913). Travel films in the Desmet Collection were also paramount to the dissertation by Jennifer Peterson, *World Pictures: Travelogue Films and the Lure of the Exotic, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). For the French travel films in the collection, see also my text "Comme l'eau qui coule: les films de rivière de Gaumont dans la collection Desmet", in *1895*, 18, 1995, pp. 156-163.
28. Aldo Bernardini, Vittorio Martinelli, *Il cinema muto italiano* (Roma: Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, 1992-1996). See also Bernardini's *Cinema muto italiano. I film "dal vero", 1895-1914* (Gemona: La Cineteca del Friuli, 2002). Other examples of reference publications using the Desmet Collection are Marguerite Engberg's classic reference volumes on Danish silent cinema, *Registrant over danske film, 1896-1930* (Copenhagen: Institut for Filmvidenskab, 1977-82), and Paolo Cherchi Usai's *Éclair* checklist in *Griffithiana* 4/45, May-September 1992, pp. 28-88.

"Photocopies of the documentation within the Desmet Collection have helped us not only in the identification of films, but also in establishing our filmography. Owing to lack of film prints you need to fall back on papers, journals, and such. The publicity material in the Desmet Collection was very welcome: not only because of the photos, but also because the plot descriptions there were much more reliable than those in programmes or trade papers, which can be a sort of novella. By viewing many films I have been able to establish this."<sup>29</sup> Apart from publications such as books and articles, many foreign and Dutch students have used the Desmet Collection for their theses and dissertations, in particular in the 1990s, aiding researches ranging from genre (crime films, Westerns, religious films) to colour, and from film posters to distribution. I myself worked from 1994 to 2000 on a Ph.D. project on Desmet's film distribution and cinema exhibition, which was published in 2003 as *Jean Desmet and the Early Dutch Film Trade*. It stood at the heart of the 2004 Domitor conference on the theme of distribution.<sup>30</sup>

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29. Interview with Vittorio Martinelli, 7 July 1999. EYE is now planning to digitize this material and offer it to scholars. It was not yet part of the complete digitization of the Desmet business archive when Martinelli was interviewed.
30. Several Dutch theses based on the Desmet Collection have been written at the Universiteit Utrecht: Alianne ter Veer, *Misdaadfilms in de Desmet-collectie* [Crime Films in the Desmet Collection] (1993); Ester Rutten, *Blik op Desmet. Aankoop en verspreiding van de vroege Franse film in Nederland* [View on Desmet. The Purchase and Spreading of Early French Cinema in the Netherlands] (1995); Joni L. Hermans, *Van kribbe tot kruis. Desmet en de vertoning van de passiefilms* [From the Manger to the Cross. Desmet and the Exhibition of the Passion Films] (1996); Nanna Verhoeff, *Early Westerns. How to Trace a Family* (1996). As well as at other universities: Giovanna Fossati, *I colori del film in nitrato* (Bologna: Università degli Studi di Bologna, 1995-96); Bregtje Lameris, *Gekleurde bespiegelingen. Een thematische verhandeling over enige Pathécolor-documentaires van voor 1914* [Coloured Reflections. A Thematic Discourse on Some Pre-1914 Pathécolor Documentaries] (Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 1997); Mustafa Özen, *Sprekende affiches voor stomme films. De Amerikaanse Vitagraph-affiches in Europa 1910-1915* [Eloquent Posters for Silent Films. American Vitagraph Posters in Europe, 1910-1915] (Amsterdam, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1998; MA thesis). Verhoeff received the Professor Peters Award for the best film studies thesis in the Netherlands and expanded it for her dissertation, published by Amsterdam University Press in 2006 as *The West in Early Cinema. After the Beginning*. In 1997 Verhoeff co-organized a workshop on early Westerns at the Universiteit Utrecht, which featured many of the Desmet Westerns. The papers of the 2004 Domitor conference on distribution were published in 2007: Frank Kessler, Nanna Verhoeff, eds., *Networks of Entertainment. Early Film Distribution, 1895-1915* (Eastleigh: John Libbey, 2007). My own presentation was published in this volume (pp. 137-144): "Infrastructure open system and the take-off phase. Jean Desmet as a case for early distribution in the Netherlands".

## DESMET'S CINEMA AND THE FILM-RELATED COLLECTIONS

The non-film part of the Desmet Collection was the focus of an extensive exhibition at the Filmmuseum in 1991 on Jean Desmet and his Cinema Parisien (1910), the cinema where he based his distribution agency, and which he lived above for several years. This was the largest exhibition on Desmet up to that time, and was held on the occasion of the Filmmuseum's 1991 installation of the lavish 1924 Art Deco interior of the Amsterdam Parisien cinema in one of its two auditoria. When the Parisien had to be demolished in 1987 to make way for the expansion of the nearby Victoria Hotel, Desmet's granddaughter Ilse Hughan kept the whole interior, which she meticulously documented with drawings, stereophotos, slides, and even a 16mm film. Hughan managed to inspire the enthusiasm of the new Filmmuseum management to preserve the interior, and after finding the Dutch VSB-bank as sponsor, architect J. van Stigt reinstalled the whole interior at the Filmmuseum, aided by Hughan's documentation. All the wooden walls and lamps were reinstalled, and the ceiling was recreated by Van Stigt. Even the glass entrance doors to the auditorium are from the Parisien, while the seats come from the Cinema Palace in Haarlem, a cinema owned in the past by one of Desmet's brothers, Mathijs. Thanks to this meticulous work, for two decades we have been able to view Desmet's films within the setting of his own cinema.<sup>31</sup>

Over the years the film-related elements of the Desmet Collection have been inventoried as well. From 1996 onwards, the Filmmuseum started an index of the business archive. In recent years the complete business archive was scanned, but is not yet online.<sup>32</sup> This is a pity, as the archive is a unique source for the research of film history, on both an international (Desmet's purchases abroad) and local level (Desmet's programming, rentals, and the

exploitation of his cinema chain), as well as on both an economic and social level. It includes the complete business archive of the Parisien cinema, well beyond Desmet's distribution era of the 1910s, as well as his real estate affairs following his film distribution activities. In 1997 a huge subvention for the poster archive enabled the restoration of all posters in the Desmet Collection that needed attention. Although some students have written theses and papers on parts of the Desmet poster collection, a thorough, comprehensive study is still lacking. The same applies to the staging of a solid exhibition, one that goes beyond merely presenting a handful of examples and relates graphic design and marketing to film history.

## LATER PRESENTATIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS AND APPROPRIATION BY FILMMAKERS

The Desmet films were not only shown abroad at festivals such as in Pordenone. The Filmmuseum also began to present itself within the Netherlands as an expert in early cinema. In 1991 the archive produced three 16mm compilations using films from the Desmet Collection, divided into national sections: "Amore e lotta" (Italian cinema), "À la campagne" (French cinema), and "A Changing Society" (American cinema). But individual films were also shown frequently at the Filmmuseum; in 1993-94 many recently preserved films from the Desmet Collection were featured in the regular Sunday afternoon screenings. In the Summer of 1993 several Desmet films were shown at the two-day Filmmuseum workshop preceding the IAMHIST conference "Film and the First World War". The workshop idea so appealed to the archive that they started to organize separate workshops based on their own holdings, first on early non-fiction (1994), then on colour in early cinema (1995), followed by several others. At the 1994 and 1995 workshops half of the programmes consisted of Desmet films. On 25-26 November 1994, the then-annual *Themadagen* [Theme Days] organized by the Filmmuseum were dedicated to the Desmet Collection; the programming consisted of reconstructions of six film programmes from Desmet's own cinemas as shown in 1913. Thanks to Desmet's business archive it was possible to reconstruct and analyse Desmet's film programmes from the 1910s. This eventually resulted

31. Filmmuseum annual report 1991; interviews with Ilse Hughan, 5 and 11 September 1995. Unfortunately the original Parisien has not been moved to the new EYE building, which opened in April 2012. One of the new auditoria is modelled upon the original interior.

32. For the time being the complete archive can be consulted on 6 DVDs in the EYE library, pending a more accessible and online version.

in a workshop on this theme, and would become a big research topic for the Filmmuseum, under former Head of Research Nico de Klerk.<sup>33</sup>

Film material from the Desmet Collection has been appropriated in numerous ways by filmmakers, particularly by cineastes employed at the Filmmuseum. In most cases the origin or the status of the films as objects within a collection did not matter so much to the filmmakers, and thus silent Desmet films were easily mixed with non-Desmet films. Around 1990, however, the primacy of the Desmet Collection was still rather strong, as many non-Desmet films still had to be restored. This led to Peter Delpout's compilation film *Lyrical Nitrate* (1990), exclusively composed of films from the Desmet Collection and also indicated as such. In his film Delpout expressed his passion for the Desmet films by a personal, almost non-narrative impression. The bright colours of the 1910s flash into your eyes, including the diegetic disturbing colours of images distorted by decomposition and solarization. Travel films, reflexive films on cinema-going and film production, and touching melodramas culminating in a reworked version of the climax of *Fiori di male*, form the basis of the film. Woven into this is a commentary on the decay of nitrate film and consequently the literal but also metaphorical disappearance of these films and their images. At the end of the film the images fade because of growing nitrate deterioration, progressing to a complete abstract kaleidoscope of colours and whiteness, with images from –hardly by chance– an American adaptation of the *Expulsion from Paradise*. The use of old recordings of classical music –opera, Lieder, symphonic music– underlines the emotional character of the film and brings back the emotional response to these early films we had lost when viewing early or silent cinema. *Lyrical Nitrate* had its worldwide premiere at the Giornate in

1990, at a memorable screening where afterwards people competed in applauding and booing, just like the audience in an opera house.<sup>34</sup>

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DESMET COLLECTION

Several people have indicated the importance of the Desmet Collection and the objects within it. The value of the Collection was different in each era, depending on its function. For Desmet, it was his film stock, his company, and, later, a memory. For his daughter who donated the collection, it was a heritage, a symbol of her father's business success. The distribution collection later became a private collection, and finally a museum collection. But even after the donation to the Filmmuseum the collection changed status, depending on the vision of the museum's then-incumbent boards on collecting.

The donation of the Desmet Collection to the Filmmuseum was a highlight in the collecting of Jan de Vaal, the first Filmmuseum manager, as it helped to lay the basis for his museum collection. Collecting for him was the creation of a "time image", realized by the objects collected. For De Vaal this did not stop only at films; everything which referred to the invention and development of the cinema interested this collector. Hence his interest in posters, photos, and the business archive of Jean Desmet. He even tried to obtain Desmet's fair-ground trailer from his travelling cinema years. History was De Vaal's big passion; his passion for cinema, another. He enriched the museum with one of the most magnificent and most unconventional film collections in the world.<sup>35</sup>

After the years of collecting under De Vaal, the subsequent years can be described as the era of preservation and presentation, both at home and abroad. This applies to both the Desmet Collection and the Filmmuseum collection at large. Coming from the world of the arts and museums, manager Hoos Blotkamp had specific ideas on collections. She considered film collections as not so different from art collections.

33. Filmmuseum annual reports 1991, 1993, 1994; programme workshop at IAMHIST conference 1993; Amsterdam Workshop programmes 1994 and 1995; Daan Hertogs, "Themadagen Jean Desmet" [Jean Desmet Theme Days], *Studiecentrum Bulletin* 2, 1994, pp. 3-5. See also the publications of the proceedings of the 1994/1995 workshops, as well as Daan Hertogs, Nico de Klerk, eds., *Nonfiction from the Teens. The 1994 Amsterdam Workshop* (Amsterdam: Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1994), *'Disorderly Order.' Colours in Silent Film. The 1995 Amsterdam Workshop* (Amsterdam: Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1996), *Uncharted Territory. Essays on Early Nonfiction Film* (Amsterdam: Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum 1997).

34. Others used films from the Desmet Collection as well, such as Eric de Kuyper (*Pink Ulysses*, 1990) and Gustav Deutsch (*Film Ist*, 2000). Delpout himself used films from the collection again in his mockumentary *The Forbidden Quest* (1993), the series *Cinema Perdu* (1995), and *Diva Dolorosa* (1999).

35. Interview with Jan de Vaal, 8 November 1995.



Both have received a surplus value through the museum. In her words we can still hear some of the dilemma of the Desmet Affair:

Surplus value is a very museum-like thing. More acknowledged by people who deal with it professionally, it attracts only the colleagues, scholars. The big audience doesn't care whether a film comes from a collection. They come for the films, for the filmmakers. Even if nowadays audiences might know better who Desmet is than who Léonce Perret is, but that is all right. [...] Dealing with films in collections has been important to us: publicity-wise, tactically. But from the content out, you have to take care that no other things will become victim, as they also have a right to existence. When you have two equal films, and one is from the Desmet Collection and the other is not, and you only have money [to preserve] one, you are posed a moral dilemma. Thanks to our extra subvention we luckily came into a position that we could do both, thank God! Or else I would have had a real problem what to select.<sup>36</sup>

Not every film or every genre scored equally high in the aesthetic valuation within and outside the museum. The repetitive character and abundant availability of early French and Italian farces within the collection did not help the appreciation of these films. Partly due to modern selections such as *Lyrical Nitrate*, sometimes an image of the collection rises that is composed largely of melodramas and travel films, while in actual numbers comedy is dominant, and in terms of total length the genres of drama and comedy are almost equal. Vittorio Martinelli discovered the diversity within the genre of comedy via the films of the Desmet Collection:

Before people always talked about "the comedians", as if they were all the same type. But when I saw the Desmet films, I realized that every comedian has his own type, that there were big differences between Cretinetti and Polidor, between Kri Kri and Robinet. You don't equal Chaplin or Buster or Harold Lloyd either, do you?! And furthermore, there is the big difference be-

tween the slapsticks and the comedies with Gigetta and Rodolfi, with Vaser and Pilotti, which deal with triangular relationships, that are more "boulevardier"-like, with their stories of terrible wives, nasty mother-in-laws, and depressed husbands.<sup>37</sup>

The Desmet Collection contains much material from a specific period which in many cases no longer exists in its country of origin. Moreover, the material has often been found in pretty good shape and been adequately preserved. Of course, with the modern "recapturing manoeuvres" of foreign film archives, a portion of the material in the Desmet Collection might prove to be less unique than before. Still, this cannot undo the historical importance of the Collection over the past two decades. Let Cherchi Usai have the last word:

Film history, as every discipline, is like a herd of vandals somehow. Once a territory has been dug up, the "barbarians" (in this case, ourselves) start looking for another area to ravage. The good thing is that the results of this sudden, violent, and creative event were spectacular. Once left alone, the Desmet Collection will probably be able to deliver other ideas and unexpected directions of research we have never thought of. But it will take time, and maybe a little less obsession for discovering the "new" at any cost.<sup>38</sup>

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37. Interview with Vittorio Martinelli, 7 July 1999. Early comedy may seem often old hat and unfunny, but they also may contain interesting examples of renewal and marketing for the individual film company (self-referentiality). Despite its repetitive character, the genre seems quite heterogeneous, but this has been indicated too seldom. See my articles "Un'occhiata da più vicino. Riconsiderare il cinema italiano delle origini / Take a closer look! Italian Early Cinema Reconsidered", in *Fotogenia* 4/5, 1999, pp. 45-58, 287-293; and "All the Same or Strategies of Difference. Early Italian Comedy in International Perspective", in Anna Antonini, ed., *Il film e i suoi multipli / Film and Its Multiples* (Udine: Forum, 2003), pp. 465-480. Early comedy suffers even more than early drama by the danger of overkill, which has regrettably been the case with comedy retrospectives at the Giornate too. See Cherchi Usai/Jacob (1985), for the Italian comedy retrospective at the Giornate.
38. Paolo Cherchi Usai, letter to the author, 23 December 1995. In 2002, on the occasion of the launch of my book on Jean Desmet, I drew up a special programme of unknown Desmet films for the Giornate. Regrettably the book's publication was delayed until 2003. For the programme, see [http://www.cinetecadelfriuli.org/gcm/previous\\_editions/edizione2002\\_frameset.html](http://www.cinetecadelfriuli.org/gcm/previous_editions/edizione2002_frameset.html). At the 2002 edition of the Giornate, several French, Italian, and American Desmet comedies appeared within the context of the "Funny Ladies" retrospective. At the 2011 edition, several Italian Desmet films were included, mainly comedies, as well as Giovanni Pastrone's sensational drama *Padre* (1912), with Ermete Zacconi.

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36. Interview with Hoos Blotkamp, 17 July 1995.



# TeleImage

restore

Vadição (1954) - Alexandre Robatto Filho

before

after

São Bernardo (1972) - Leon Hirzsmann

before

after

A Grande Feira (1961) - Roberto Pires

before

after

Entre o Mar e o Tendam (1953) - Alexandre Robatto Filho

before

after

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Ceci est le texte original d'Ivo Bloom sur Jean Desmet et les débuts du commerce cinématographique aux Pays-Bas, publié initialement en néerlandais (2000). Il contient des informations qui n'avaient pas été reprises dans le texte en anglais paru en 2003.

En 2011, la Collection Desmet de EYE Film Institute Netherlands (nouvelle raison sociale du Netherlands Filmmuseum) fut incorporée au Registre de la Mémoire du Monde de l'UNESCO. L'auteur nous invite à découvrir en détail l'histoire récente de cette collection conservée au Netherlands Filmmuseum, et à participer à la prise de conscience croissante de sa richesse et de son impact dans des festivals à l'étranger, à commencer par les Giornate del Cinema Muto à Pordenone.

L'auteur évoque les premières projections de films de la Collection Desmet, le succès remporté aux Giornate del Cinema Muto à Pordenone en 1986, grâce à la présentation dans son programme de la série consacrée aux divas italiennes du film *Fior de male* (Cines, 1915), les diverses projections de la collection aux Pays-Bas et ailleurs, et les changements de la politique des collections survenus à la suite du "cas Desmet" en 1989.

L'article traite en détail des effets de cette couverture médiatique, et examine la reconnaissance de la collection au sein du Netherlands Filmmuseum et au-delà. Il décrit aussi la reconnaissance de l'importance de la restauration des couleurs, la découverte et l'exploration de la collection par des chercheurs et programmeurs de festivals internationaux, et ses effets sur les recherches en histoire du cinéma. Il se penche également sur la reconnaissance des collections non-film et des intérieurs de la dernière salle de Desmet, le Cinéma Parisien, ainsi que sur la réutilisation du fonds film par des cinéastes, dont le premier fut Peter Delpout avec *Lyrical Nitrate* (1990).

Aux sources écrites s'ajoutent aujourd'hui les témoignages recueillis auprès des anciens directeurs du Netherlands Filmmuseum, Jan de Vaal et Hoos Blotkamp, de l'ancienne conservatrice des collections de cinéma du MoMA, Eileen Bowser, des historiens du cinéma Vittorio Martinelli et Roland Cosandey, du réalisateur Peter Delpout, et du conservateur cinématographique à la George Eastman House, Paolo Cherchi Usai.

Se trata de la presentación original neerlandesa actualizada y traducida de Ivo Blom (2000) sobre Jean Desmet y los comienzos del comercio cinematográfico en Holanda. El texto contiene información que no fue incluida en su versión inglesa de 2003.

En 2011, la Colección Desmet del EYE Film Institute Netherlands (nueva denominación del Netherlands Filmmuseum) fue incorporada al Registro de la Memoria del Mundo de la UNESCO. Blom nos invita a descubrir en detalle la historia reciente de esta colección conservada en el Netherlands Filmmuseum, y a participar en la toma de conciencia de su riqueza e impacto en festivales extranjeros, a comenzar por las Giornate del Cinema Muto en Pordenone.

El artículo evoca las primeras proyecciones de películas de la Colección Desmet, el éxito alcanzado en el Festival de Pordenone en 1986 gracias a la presentación en el programa de divas italianas el film *Fior de male*, (Cines, 1915), la exhibición de la colección en Holanda y otros países, así como los cambios de políticas de colección derivados de lo que en 1989 se dio en llamar el "caso Desmet".

Las discusiones sobre la importancia de esta exhibición, descrita in extenso, tuvieron un efecto decisivo sobre las toma de conciencia acerca de la importancia de la colección en y fuera del Netherlands Filmmuseum, contribuyeron al reconocimiento de la importancia de la restauración de los colores, al descubrimiento y estudio de la colección por catedráticos internacionales y programadores de festivales, y extendieron su influencia sobre la investigación histórica, el reconocimiento de las colecciones no cine y el estudio de la estructura de los interiores de la última sala de Desmet – el Cinéma Parisien – y, finalmente, sobre la reutilización del fondo de la colección por directores de cine, tales como Peter Delpout en *Lyrical Nitrate* (1990).

A las fuentes escritas, se suman los testimonios sobre la importancia de las colecciones recogidos de los antiguos directores del Netherlands Filmmuseum, Jan de Vaal y Hoos Blotkamp, de la curadora de las colecciones del MoMA, Eileen Bowser, de los historiadores del cine Vittorio Martinelli y Roland Cosandey, del director cinematográfico y escritor Peter Delpout, y del curador en George Eastman House, Paolo Cherchi Usai.

# Early Passive and Active Preservation at the Netherlands Filmmuseum, 1956-1984

Bregt Lameris

**Bregt Lameris:** Assistant Professor of Film and Television at Utrecht University; from November 2012, research fellow at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, on the project "Colour in the 1920s". Her Ph.D. dissertation on the history of the Netherlands Film Museum, *Re-exposed*, will be published by Amsterdam University Press in 2013.

In the history of film archives, film preservation and restoration were slow to get started. Even though archives experimented from the beginning with film preservation by making safety duplicates of their nitrate material, it did not become common practice until the 1970s. John Culhane's 1977 article "Nitrate Won't Wait"<sup>1</sup> and the 1978 FIAF Congress in Brighton are particularly regarded as having initiated a growing awareness about the importance of passive and active preservation<sup>2</sup>. However, lately more historical research has shown that the reason for this slow start was not due to the fact that archives weren't aware of the necessity for preservation. On the contrary, they were certainly familiar with such problems as the fragility and danger of nitrate film stock. So why did archives seem unable to start the preservation process as we know it today?

This case study investigates in detail the reasons for this slow start in film preservation and restoration practices, using the history of the Netherlands Filmmuseum (now EYE Film Institute Netherlands). Firstly,

because its history has not yet been described properly. Secondly, despite the fact that the Netherlands Filmmuseum invested time and money in the development of preservation and restoration during the period from 1956 to 1984, these activities remained unsuccessful until the 1970s. I aim to give an insight into the history of film preservation and restoration practices in the Netherlands, and explain why it took until the late 1970s to actually start systematic preservation and restoration activities, including finances, bureaucracy, apparatus, and research and development.

In 1956 Jan de Vaal, the Filmmuseum's director until the mid-1980s, wrote a report on the necessity of both passive and active preservation of the films in their collection. One of the things most urgently needed was a substantial vault to store nitrate films, to slow down the decay of already affected material. The estimated cost of such a vault was 950,000 guilders.<sup>3</sup> The report resulted in the Filmmuseum receiving a small subsidy from the Dutch government of 5,000 guilders. This was far below the amount needed, but luck-

1. *American Film*, vol. 2, no. 5, March 1977, pp. 54-59.  
2. Bowser, Eileen, "The Brighton Project: An Introduction", *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Fall 1979, pp. 509-538.

3. BA - pallet 27 box 324: "Richtlijnen voor de ontwikkeling van het Nederlands Filmmuseum" ["Guidelines for the development of the Netherlands Filmmuseum"], 1956.

ily the city of Amsterdam placed an old art bunker in Castricum at the disposal of the Filmmuseum for storage purposes, which thanks to the subsidy it was able to turn into a provisional nitrate vault.<sup>4</sup> It also hired a vault keeper, Dirk Huizinga, and put him in charge of the nitrate film collection.

One of Huizinga's first official activities was a visit to Ernest Lindgren in London to learn about the latest developments in film preservation techniques.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the Filmmuseum established a provisional laboratory next to its nitrate vault in Castricum in 1958.<sup>6</sup> At first this laboratory consisted of equipment to check, repair, and view the archive's films. The films also underwent a "hypo test" to check the quality of the films' emulsion. They were then cleaned with "tetra", a technique that was later discovered to be ineffective and actually damaging to the films. Jan de Vaal also wanted to acquire a "washing machine", a device to automatically wash archival film, and to perform the so-called "ageing test", to ascertain the actual state of the nitrate material. This latter procedure was highly controversial in the archive world, since it involved punching holes in the archival material. Henri Langlois, for one, strongly objected to it.<sup>7</sup> Besides, as long as there was no means to duplicate deteriorating films, ageing tests were virtually useless.

In 1961, due to increasing problems with the provisional vault – the temperature was too high, the rooms were too small, and there was too much humidity to really keep the films safe – the scarcely developed activities of the laboratory stagnated. The construction of an entirely new vault was needed to avoid irreparable damage to the collection.<sup>8</sup> On top of this, in 1963 Dirk Huizinga fell seriously ill (he died in 1966), and in 1964 Henk de Smit was hired to replace him. Under De Smit's supervision, in 1965

the Filmmuseum rented the coach house and villa of the "Koningshof" estate in Overveen, Bloemendaal, which permitted the construction of dedicated nitrate vaults from scratch.<sup>9</sup>

However, nobody knew precisely what conditions a nitrate vault should provide to stop the deterioration of archival films. For this reason the Filmmuseum started to investigate the optimal conditions for nitrate storage in collaboration with the TNO (Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research). In 1968 a report of the Netherlands Filmmuseum's findings was published; their advanced research was sufficiently ground-breaking for it to be translated into French, German, and English by FIAF for distribution among the international film archive community.<sup>10</sup>

However, due to administrative bureaucracy it would take another five years for the Filmmuseum to receive the necessary financing. Thus it could not actually begin to build the vaults until 1971, 15 years after De Vaal first drew attention to the problem of nitrate deterioration. In the meantime, the situation in Castricum was starting to become serious. Due to bad climatological conditions – too many films in one room and the lack of space and time to check and preserve them – some of the material had begun to rot. Ultimately, some of the prints decomposed to the point where they had to be destroyed.<sup>11</sup> In the end, it was not until 1975 that the institute was finally able to finish the vaults and store its nitrate material in the best possible conditions.

Because of the efforts needed for the passive preservation of nitrate, active preservation and restoration was put on hold. The rare cases of restoration the Filmmuseum did perform consisted of repairs to badly damaged nitrate prints to make them projectable. Perforations, weak joins, and tears needed to be repaired in order to allow a print to pass through a projector again.<sup>12</sup> This restoration practice can be compared to that of paintings and other art

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4. Filmmuseum - Newspaper archive: "In Castricum sluimert het Filmarchief" ["The film archive is slumbering in Castricum"], *De Rotterdammer*, 14 September 1963.

5. Annual Report Nederlands Film Museum 1958, p. 19.

6. Annual Report Nederlands Film Museum 1959, p. 1.

7. This refers to the alizarin red ageing test. See Roger Smither, "Henri Langlois and Nitrate, Before and After 1959", in *This Film Is Dangerous: A Celebration of Nitrate Film*, Roger Smither and Catherine A. Surowiec, eds., London: FIAF, 2002, p. 249.

8. Annual Report Nederlands Film Museum 1960, p. 19.

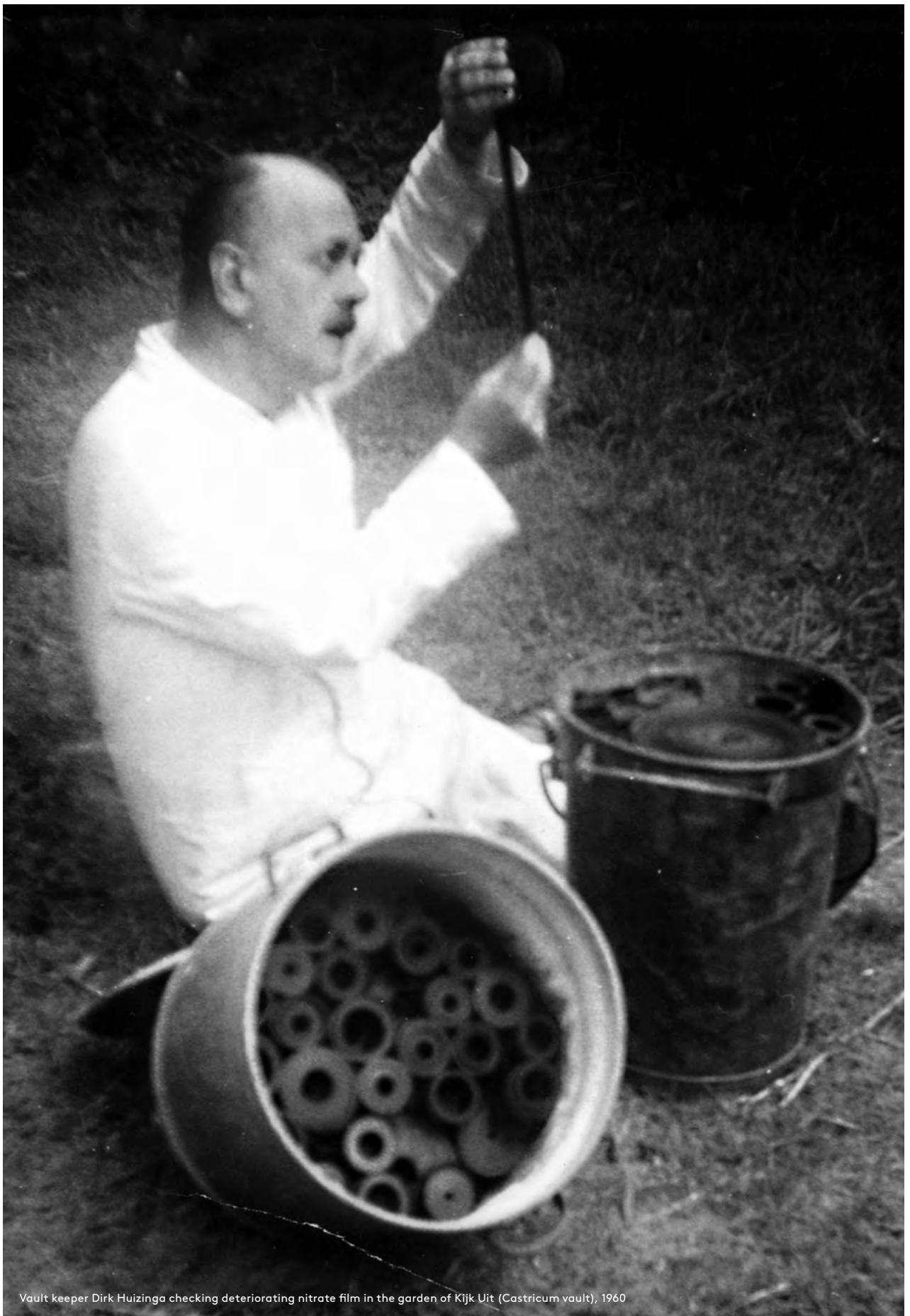
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9. Annual Report Nederlands Film Museum 1965, p. 1.

10. Annual Report Nederlands Film Museum 1969, p. 31.

11. Annual Report Nederlands Film Museum 1970, p. 28; Annual Report Nederlands Film Museum 1973, p. 23.

12. Annual Report Nederlands Film Museum 1958, p. 22.



Vault keeper Dirk Huizinga checking deteriorating nitrate film in the garden of Kijk Uit (Castricum vault), 1960





Vault keeper Dirk Huizinga and technician Arie van de Bijl checking nitrate material from the Desmet Collection at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1957

objects. As Cesare Brandi observed on the opening page of his famous book *Theory of Restoration*: “Restoration is generally understood to mean any intervention that permits a product of human activity to recover its function.”<sup>13</sup>

The repair of perforations, weak joins, and other interventions permitted films to recover their original function: to be projected and shown. Similar to the restoration of paintings, sculptures, mosaics, and vases, these acts of repair directly altered the original objects. However, the immediate display of the original object had a far greater impact on film than on other art objects. Even though paintings and sculptures are of course affected by light and other conditions when put on display, the damage they experience is far from similar to that

of film prints. This leads us to the conclusion that the approach to nitrate prints was somewhat dualistic in the 1960s and 1970s: on the one hand, they were treated as archival objects that needed to be protected from deterioration (by storage in vaults), while on the other, they were put on display in their function as projection prints for Filmmuseum screenings.<sup>14</sup>

In 1961, the film historian Georges Sadoul wrote an article on the necessity to avoid the projection of archival films as much as possible, in order to limit damage and keep the films safe. According to Sadoul, the nitrate elements needed to be duplicated so that they would no longer be required for projection purposes. Nevertheless, he added that if film museums lacked duplicates they were still obliged to project the originals in order to save the films from oblivion.<sup>15</sup> This appears to be similar to the Netherlands Filmmuseum’s

13. Cesare Brandi, *Theory of Restoration/Teoria del restauro*, originally published 1963, republished 1977; trans. Cynthia Rockwell, Rome: Istituto Centrale per il Restauro, Nardini Editore, 2005; quotation from the 2005 edition. Although Brandi’s original book dates from 1963, it is still part of the contemporary discourse on restoration, demonstrated by the fact that in 2005 it was translated into English, while in 1995 portions of it had already been incorporated into the Getty Conservation Institute’s anthology *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*.

14. The projection of nitrate prints continued until the mid-1970s.  
15. Georges Sadoul, “Cinémathèques et photothèques,” in *L’histoire et ses méthodes*, Charles Samaran, ed., *Encyclopédie de la pléiade*, Vol. 11, Paris: Gallimard, 1961, pp. 1168-1178. Quotation from p. 1175.

predicament. Since the vintage nitrate prints were the only ones available, and the institute simply did not have the money to produce a duplicate of every film it wanted to show, in many cases there was no other option but to project the fragile archival prints.

However, there is also a difference between what Sadoul wrote and what the Netherlands Filmmuseum was doing in practice. In Filmmuseum parlance “preservation” meant the duplication of film images on acetate negative material. Jan de Vaal was of the opinion that acetate prints would last over 100 years. Therefore, as soon as a film had been duplicated on acetate negative it was considered preserved for the future. Storing nitrate images on safety material would enable the Filmmuseum to produce new projection prints whenever the nitrate print eventually disappeared. However, since no acetate projection prints were made, the use and damaging of vintage nitrate prints continued.<sup>16</sup> The Netherlands Filmmuseum did not protect nitrate prints from projection, which Georges Sadoul had pleaded for in 1961. It only protected the film images by storing them on acetate negative for the presumed next 100 years. Jan de Vaal (and the Netherlands Filmmuseum) considered the film text to be more valuable than the vintage nitrate prints.<sup>17</sup>

New projection prints were only made in cases of extreme shrinkage or other deterioration that made the screening of the nitrate impossible. In 1960, for example, the Filmmuseum received a heavily damaged, unprojectable vintage nitrate print of the “first Dutch fiction-film”, *De mésaventure van een Fransch heertje*

*zonder pantalon aan het strand te Zandvoort* [*The Adventures of a French Gentleman with No Pants in Zandvoort*] (Albert and Willy Mullens, 1905). In order to make this film projectable and thus visible again, a positive duplicate was made for projection, besides the usual negative print made to preserve the images.

Another example is that of the Desmet Collection. In 1967 the Filmmuseum wanted to start restoring this collection, which at the time still consisted of around 1,000 nitrate prints from the 1910s.<sup>18</sup> Due to shrinkage a high percentage of these prints could not be projected, nor could film laboratories pass them through their duplication machines. In order to make the restoration of these films possible the Filmmuseum needed to develop specially adapted equipment. Since the construction of the nitrate vaults in Overveen took all the energy, knowledge, and finances of the technical staff, the development of such apparatus was not possible at the time.<sup>19</sup>

Notwithstanding the efforts made to build nitrate vaults for the protection of their archival films, by the beginning of the 1970s the Filmmuseum needed to dispose of nitrate films in a severe state of decomposition. The fact that they had to do this made clear the importance of active preservation. Still, it would take until the late 1970s for the Filmmuseum to seriously start duplicating the films in its collection and simultaneously discontinue the projection of nitrate material. The main reason for this delay was the construction of the nitrate vaults, which took until 1975. As soon as the vaults were ready, the Filmmuseum resumed the laboratory activities they had begun two decades earlier. For this purpose it acquired a Debrue film printer, which was adapted for the so-called “two-image-per-second duplication technique” needed for the duplication of very old films, such as those in the Desmet Collection.<sup>20</sup>

16. During this period the external laboratory Cinetone was mostly hired for preservation work. (FMBA – Correspondence between the Filmmuseum and Cinetone Studios)

17. Due to budgetary limits, such duplicate negatives were not produced very often. In 1958 for example, the institute's budget had only enough funds to preserve 8 titles. The preserved titles were so-called “art films”, such as *De Brug* (Ivens, 1928), *Inflation* (Richter, 1927/28), *Markt in Berlin* (Basse, 1929), *Polizeibericht Überfall* (Metzner, 1928), *Zéro de conduite* (Vigo, 1933), *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (Dreyer, 1927/28), and *Berlin. Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (Ruttman, 1927). In addition, Amsterdam and Rotterdam provided financial support for the preservation of film material concerning their two cities. These films were so popular that new positives were ordered again and again, causing damage to the negative preservation element. A second duplicate negative was made for some of the films from the “Amsterdam Collection”. (Annual Report Netherlands Film Museum 1970, p. 28)

18. Due to decay and exchange activities between FIAF members a portion of the material has disappeared from the Netherlands. At this moment there are around 800 titles left in the Desmet Collection.

19. At that point the situation was so bad that even the money for acquisition, preservation, storage, and film checking went to the vaults. (Annual Report Netherlands Film Museum 1970, p. 28)

20. Annual Report Netherlands Film Museum 1975-1976-1977, p. 63.

However, due to an ongoing lack of funding, serious restoration of the nitrate material was again delayed.<sup>21</sup> In 1976 the Filmmuseum issued a report describing the vulnerability of its nitrate material. Under the heading "destruction of cellulose nitrate film material", it provided information on the auto-destructive chemical reactions inherent in nitrate. In conclusion, the Filmmuseum emphasized the urgent need to actively preserve the nitrate film collection, now safely stored in its vaults.<sup>22</sup>

This report, which appeared one year before John Culhane's famous article "Nitrate Won't Wait", resulted in the Filmmuseum receiving its first large subsidy for active film preservation, in 1979.<sup>23</sup> As soon as the money was received, active preservation began immediately.<sup>24</sup> As a consequence, 57,961 metres of sound and 52,414 metres of silent film material were preserved by the Filmmuseum from 1980 to 1984. Most of the preservation work was done by the Dutch laboratories Cineco, the Color Film Center in The Hague, and Cinetone. However, in 1984 the Filmmuseum turned entirely for its restorations to Haghefilm, which from that point onwards developed into a laboratory specializing in the preservation of old film material.<sup>25</sup> The Filmmuseum could then seriously start working on the active preservation of its collection. However, the battle for finances, equipment, staff, and new knowledge based on new research would continue, only in different proportions and for different reasons.

21. Annual Report Netherlands Film Museum 1975-1976-1977, p. 16.
22. FMBA – pallet 4: "Beleidsnota Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum" ["Policy Document Foundation Netherlands Filmmuseum"], 1976.
23. Annual Report Netherlands Film Museum 1980, p. 2; John Culhane, "Nitrate Won't Wait", *American Film*, vol. 2 no. 5, March 1977, p. 59.
24. Annual Report Netherlands Film Museum 1984, p. 1.
25. Netherlands Film Museum: D-base vault catalogue.

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L'historiographie des archives cinématographiques mentionne la généralisation de la préservation – « active et passive » – tardivement. Après l'apparition de la pellicule acétate, et les premières expérimentations de transferts du nitrate sur acétate, la préservation ne s'est généralisée que dans les années 1970.

La prise de conscience de l'importance de la préservation s'est généralisée grâce à l'article de John Culhane « Nitrate Won't Wait » (« Le nitrate n'attend pas »), en 1977, et au Congrès de la FIAF de Brighton, en 1978. Des recherches historiques plus récentes tendent à démontrer que les raisons de ces débuts tardifs n'étaient pas dues à l'absence de prise de conscience dans les archives de la nécessité et l'urgence de la préservation. Il semble au contraire certain que les archives connaissaient l'importance des dangers et de la fragilité du nitrate.

L'auteur analyse les raisons du retard de la préservation et des pratiques de restauration en prenant l'histoire du Netherlands Filmmuseum (devenu le EYE Film Institute Netherlands) comme cas d'étude. D'abord elle fonde sa recherche sur le fait que l'histoire détaillée de cet organisme restait encore à être écrite. En second lieu, elle tente d'analyser les raisons du retard pris par les résultats des efforts du Netherlands Filmmuseum, car les investissements en ressources humaines et financières consacrés à la préservation dès 1956 ne portèrent leurs fruits que dans les années 1970.

Dans son essai, l'auteur nous propose une étude historique des pratiques de préservation et restauration appliquées en Hollande et tente d'expliquer pourquoi les activités de l'Institution, comprenant les finances, l'administration, l'équipement, la recherche et développement n'ont suivi que tardivement.

es

La historiografía de los archivos cinematográficos menciona la generalización de preservación cinematográfica – "activa y passiva" – tardíamente. Luego de los comienzos de la película en acetato, y las primeras experiencias de copiado del material nitrato al acetato, la práctica corriente de la preservación se generalizó recién en la década del 1970.

La toma de conciencia de la importancia de la preservación recién empezó a generalizarse gracias al artículo de John Culhane "Nitrate Won't Wait" ("El nitrato no espera"), 1977, y al Congreso de la FIAF de Brighton, en 1978. Investigaciones históricas más recientes tienden a demostrar que las razones de ese despegue tardío no se debió a la ausencia de toma de conciencia en los archivos de la necesidad y urgencia de la preservación. Parece por cierto seguro que los archivos conocían la importancia del problema de los peligros y la fragilidad del nitrato.

El autor investiga las razones del atraso en la preservación cinematográfica y en las prácticas de restauración, tomando la historia del Netherlands Filmmuseum (ahora EYE Film Institute Netherlands) como caso de estudio. Su estudio se justifica en primer lugar, porque la historia de este organismo no había sido escrita aún de manera detallada. En Segundo lugar, porque habiendo invertido recursos humanos y financieros en el desarrollo de la preservación y restauración a partir de 1956, los esfuerzos del Netherlands Filmmuseum recién comenzaron a dar sus frutos en los años 1970. En su ensayo, el autor nos brinda un estudio histórico de las prácticas de preservación y restauración vigentes en Holanda y procura explicar por qué las actividades de la Institución, incluyendo finanzas, administración, equipos, investigación y desarrollo comenzaron a generalizarse tardíamente.

# Brakhage and Frenhofer

Robert A. Haller

Robert A. Haller: Director – Special Programs, Collections, Anthology Film Archives, New York

I recently turned up something interesting about Stan Brakhage's 1979 film *Roman Numeral I*. The *Roman Numerals* is a series of films he called "imagnostic", which was a term (derived from Catullus) to label images that Stan said "would ordinarily be called abstract, non-objective, non-representational, etc." I will return to this in a moment.

Stan and I were both good friends with Sharon Rupert, a dancer who appeared in my photographs and in two of Brakhage's *Sexual Meditations – Room with a View* (1971) and *Office Suite* (1972). In the 1980s, as we were walking through the Lower East Side, I asked him if he had ever shot anything else with Sharon. He glanced at me and said yes, that she was in *Roman Numeral I*, but could not be recognized because she was under so many layers of cellophane. So obscured, Rupert was certainly non-objective.

In the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Anthology Film Archives preserved *Room with a View*, *Office Suite*, and the whole *Roman Numerals* series.

Earlier this week I ran across a reference to Balzac's 1831 short story "Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu", which is about a portrait hidden by the painter Frenhofer. For most film audiences Frenhofer is best known as the protagonist of

Jacques Rivette's 1991 film *La Belle Noiseuse*, whose painter walls up his abstract portrait of his model, played by Emmanuelle Béart. A connection clicked in my mind, and was confirmed by re-reading Brakhage's description of *I*, in which he cites Catullus writing: "His mind solidly filled with fancies of a girl." As Béart was for Rivette/Frenhofer, so Rupert was for Brakhage.

And there is more. One of Brakhage's closest friends was Sidney Peterson, who in 1949 made a film, *Mr. Frenhofer and the Minotaur*, based on Balzac's story. *Roman Numeral I* must – I believe – be not only a tribute to Rupert, but also to Peterson, who drew Brakhage's attention to the Balzac story.

fr

En 1979, l'artiste d'avant-garde américain Stan Brakhage réalisa un film expérimental, *Roman Numeral "I"*. Cette œuvre, abstraite, possédait une dimension occulte qui fut découverte plus tard, et qui consistait en ce que l'un de ses acteurs, Sharon Rupert, était à ce point tellement enfouie sous les cellophanes de Brakhage qu'on ne pouvait pas la reconnaître.

Douze ans plus tard, Jacques Rivette réalisa *La Belle Noiseuse*, film qui se termine par une prise de vue d'un tableau représentant Emmanuelle Béart peint par Frenhofer (inspiré de l'histoire originale de Balzac, 1831), dont l'image était dissimulée sous une couche de peinture à l'huile, faisant allusion au film de Sidney Peterson *Mr. Frenhofer and the Minotaur* (1949) : tous ces artistes rendent un hommage occulte à leurs pairs et à leurs modèles.



Frame enlargement from Brakhage's *Room with a View* (1971)

es

En 1979, el director de cine Americano de vanguardia Stan Brakhage realizó una película experimental, *Roman Numeral "I"*. Esta obra, abstracta, tenía una dimensión oculta que se descubrió más adelante y que consistía en que uno de sus actores, Sharon Rupert, estaba tan escondida debajo de celofanes que no se le podía reconocer.

Doce años más tarde, Jacques Rivette realizó *La Belle Noiseuse*, película que concluye mostrando un cuadro de Emmanuelle Béart realizado por Frenhofer (inspirado de la historia original de Balzac de 1831), cuya imagen estaba disimulada bajo una capa de óleo, y hacía alusión a la película de Sidney Peterson *Mr. Frenhofer and the Minotaur* (1949) y sus artistas rindiendo un homenaje oculto a sus pares y a sus modelos.



# Realizing a Dream: *Napoléon vu par Abel Gance*

Rob Byrne

Rob Byrne: President, Board of Directors, San Francisco Silent Film Festival.

The premiere of *Napoléon vu par Abel Gance* on 7 April 1927 at the Opéra in Paris was in every sense a triumphant occasion. The scope, scale, and daring of Gance's vision astonished audiences with a feast of visual artistry which included triple-screen triptych sequences projected using an innovative multi-projector process that Gance called "Polyvision." Gance continued to expand the film after the premiere, producing a longer 'complete' version, but the film's unique technical demands exceeded the commercial realities of ordinary exhibitors. Soon Gance's opus was being reconfigured and released, often without the Polyvision sequences, in various shortened versions.

Twenty-seven years after the Paris premiere, 15-year-old Kevin Brownlow happened upon two 9.5mm reels of a Pathescope reduction, thereby sparking his lifelong quest to restore the complete version of the epic. Over the subsequent five decades he produced several generations of restoration. In 1980 his then-latest restoration, created in collaboration with the British Film Institute, famously triumphed with sold-out performances at Radio City Music Hall, which showcased an orchestral score composed by Carmine Coppola. The success of these shows, produced by Robert A. Harris and Francis Ford Coppola, led to a 1980-81 tour of American cities and later abroad. Ironically, as had been

the case 50 years earlier, budgetary concerns regarding the cost of performance demanded that the restoration itself be cut. The film's running time was reduced to 4 hours by removing material, excising the subplot involving the character of *Violine*, and upping the projection speed to 24 fps.

Brownlow's collaboration with the BFI continued with subsequent restorations; a fuller restoration completed in 1983 was in turn followed by the present restored version created in 2000 under the auspices of Photoplay Productions, the company run by Patrick Stanbury and Kevin Brownlow. Owing to newly available material, the BFI Photoplay restoration includes approximately 30 minutes of additional footage and replaces or upgrades much of the material in the earlier restorations. New titles consistent with the originals were shot and the BFI's NFTVA lab reproduced Gance's original tinting and toning scheme using dye-bath processes. With its additional footage and corrected projection speed, the restoration occupies a cumulative screen time of 5 and a half hours. Composer Carl Davis, who had scored the unabbreviated 1980 restoration, and subsequently adapted his score to the longer 1983 version, once again expanded his composition to accommodate the even fuller 2000 restoration. This most-complete realization has been performed



Constructing the 80x20-foot projection screen, Paramount Theatre, Oakland



*Napoléon* audience; two of the three temporary projection booths can be seen at the back of the theatre



Carl Davis conducts the *Napoléon* triptych finale



*Napoléon* triptych image, taken from the back of the theatre

four times since its completion: three times at London's Royal Festival Hall (once in 2000 and twice in 2004), and once in 2001 in Udine, Italy, as part of Le Giornate del Cinema Muto.

Prior to 2012, the BFI Photoplay restoration had not been seen outside Europe, and there had been no performance of Carl Davis's score, for any version of the film, in the US. At the San Francisco Silent Film Festival we had long dreamed of doing both. Unfortunately rights difficulties had long frustrated our hopes, until finally in 2010 came word from Patrick Stanbury that settlement of the issues created the possibility of moving forward. Thrilled with the news, we immediately began laying plans. We were determined to present Gance's masterpiece to the grandest extent possible, which included having Carl Davis at the podium conducting his full orchestral score. Unlike any other live cinema performance, every aspect of producing *Napoleon* presents outsized challenges. The triptych finale demands custom construction of a triple-width screen with movable masking, and projection requires a team of five projectionists operating three synchronized variable-speed 35mm projectors. The orchestra requires a practice hall and a week of rehearsal time. We also enjoyed the challenge of tracking down a hurdy-gurdy, a first in the festival's 17-year history. The production's massive scale also demanded that we abandon the festival's traditional home at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco and temporarily relocate across the Bay to the grand Paramount theatre in Oakland, a restored 1931 Art Deco movie palace seating 3,000, and the only film venue in the San Francisco Bay Area featuring a full-sized orchestra pit.

Planning, preparation, negotiation, and fund-raising consumed most of early 2011. Early in our planning it became clear that multiple performances would be required if we were to have any hope of financial viability. The one-time costs for set-up, equipment rental, lighting, sound, construction, transportation, travel, publicity, film rights, music rights, and orchestra rehearsal were simply too great. The only viable option was to schedule multiple performances, which would provide some hope of generating enough revenue to cover costs. Ultimately we decided upon a total of

four performances, two each on succeeding weekends in early 2012. The only question was, would anybody come? Even by spreading the costs across the four performances, our unsubsidized ticket prices would far exceed what people were used to paying for a "movie." In order to break even we needed to sell a very high percentage of our 12,000 seating capacity – a tall order for a silent film lasting over 5 and a half hours, and with ticket prices ranging from \$40 to \$120.

The final push began several weeks prior to opening night, when all activities converged onto Oakland. We had collaborated closely with Photoplay throughout the development process, and we worked hand-in-hand during the preparations and build-out. Carl Davis arrived and began daily rehearsals with the Oakland East Bay Symphony. For projection, the festival secured the services of Boston Light and Sound, Inc., who had provided the same services for the Zoetrope tour in 1980-81. Final preparations for the build-out in the theatre took a full week, during which the specially built 80x20-foot screen was constructed and mounted. The screen was mounted with two angled "wings," allowing it to be mounted beyond the bounds of the proscenium arch and extended to the full width of the auditorium. The two side wings were masked with black fabric which pulled back to reveal the side screens for the climactic triptych finale. The screen configuration and the requirement for simultaneous 3-screen projection precluded us from using the Paramount's own projection capabilities. Instead, carpenters constructed three temporary light-proof, sound-proof, and vibration-free projection booths on platforms at the rear of the main-level seating area.

The curtain rose at exactly 1:30pm on Saturday, 24 March 2012, and Gance and Davis held sway for the next 8 and a half hours. The film was performed in 4 acts, with 20-minute intervals between Acts 1-2 and 3-4 and a 105-minute intermission for dinner between Acts 2 and 3, providing respite for the audience and a rest period for the orchestra. While our opening weekend ticket sales had been strong, they were not as high as we had hoped, but inside the auditorium the perfor-

mance was a triumph. The print was gorgeous and Carl Davis's score was transcendent. The audience roared in approval and gasped in awe when the screen widened to reveal the triptych. In the lobby afterwards, Kevin Brownlow himself commented that the film had never looked better.

The ovation at the film's conclusion was thunderous. *This* was the wildly enthusiastic reception that we had dreamed of. Reviews after the first weekend were ecstatic. The *San Francisco Chronicle* called it "a day you will remember for the rest of your life," the *New York Post* advised "it's worth begging, borrowing and/or stealing to partake of," and Kenneth Turan of the *Los Angeles Times* declared it "one of the world's great cinematic experiences." Better still, word-of-mouth and social media caught fire. People left the theatre as true believers and raved to their friends and co-work-

ers. Sales for the final weekend skyrocketed, and by the time the second weekend began the remaining performances had sold out.

The final two performances played to packed and wildly enthusiastic houses. Closing night ended with roaring ovations for Carl Davis, Kevin Brownlow, and Patrick Stanbury that seemed like they would never end. Standing in the stillness of the lobby after the crowd had cleared, it was hard to believe that the labours of the past two years had reached conclusion. In the final tally, our balance sheet indicates that we lost money, but dollars can be a poor yardstick for success. We realized a dream, and for that we are all the richer.

*Napoléon vu par Abel Gance* was presented by the San Francisco Silent Film Festival in association with American Zoetrope, The Film Preserve, BFI, and Photoplay Productions.

fr

La première de *Napoléon vu par Abel Gance* le 7 avril 1927 à l'Opéra de Paris fut un événement triomphal à tous égards. L'ampleur, l'échelle et l'audace de la vision de Gance éblouit les spectateurs, notamment dans les séquences du célèbre triptyque projeté avec le système de projection multi-écran que Gance appela «Polyvision».

Vingt-sept ans après la première à Paris, Kevin Brownlow – alors âgé de 15 ans – tomba sur deux bobines Pathéscope 9.5mm, fait qui sera déterminant pour le chemin qu'il s'est désormais tracé dans sa recherche de la restauration de l'épopée napoléonienne de Gance. Associé au BFI, ses travaux débouchèrent sur trois versions restaurées, dont la dernière et la plus achevée est celle qu'il réalisa, en collaboration avec Patrick Stanbury, son associé de Photoplay Productions, en 2000. En raison de la complexité juridique, l'importance et le coût du montage d'un tel spectacle, cette dernière restauration BFI-Photoplay fut l'objet de quatre projections seulement, jamais ailleurs qu'en Europe.

En 2012, le Festival de cinéma muet de San Francisco a décidé d'organiser la première américaine de la restauration 5½ heures de BFI-Photoplay, avec la partition sous la direction de son compositeur Carl Davis. L'organisation des projections impliqua de nouveaux défis pour les organisateurs, et en particulier la projection synchronisée sur trois écrans, les cadences variables de la vitesse de projection, l'interprétation musicale, la direction d'éclairages, du son et de la scène, ainsi que la durée épique du spectacle. Dans son article, le président du festival Rob Byrne nous livre un récit détaillé du développement et exécution du spectacle de 2012, en y incluant des détails sur le contexte historique, la planification, le montage et la réalisation du projet.

es

El estreno de *Napoléon vu par Abel Gance* el 7 de abril de 1927 en la Opera de Paris fue en todo sentido un acontecimiento triunfal. La amplitud, la escala y la audacia de la visión de Gance dejó atónitas a las audiencias de este festival con su festín de arte visual que incluía secuencias del famoso tríptico exhibidas mediante un ingenioso procedimiento de proyección multipantallas que Gance denominó "Polyvision."

Veintisiete años después del estreno en París, Kevin Brownlow – que en ese entonces tenía 15 años de edad – dio con dos bobinas Pathéscope 9.5mm, dando así por iniciada la búsqueda de su vida plasmada en la restauración de la epopeya napoleónica de Gance. Asociado con el BFI, sus trabajos generaron tres versiones restauradas, cuya última y más acabada es la que realizó, en colaboración con Patrick Stanbury, su socio de Photoplay Productions, en el año 2000. Debido a la complejidad jurídica, la amplitud y el costo del montaje de este tipo de espectáculo, esta última restauración de BFI-Photoplay solo fue mostrada cuatro veces desde su terminación, y nunca fuera de Europa.

En 2012, el Festival de cine mudo de San Francisco decidió organizar la primera americana de la restauración de 5½ horas de BFI-Photoplay, con la partitura bajo la dirección de su compositor Carl Davis. La organización de las proyecciones representaron nuevos retos para los organizadores, incluyendo la proyección sincronizada sobre tres pantallas, cadencias variables de velocidad de proyección, la interpretación orquestal, la dirección de iluminación, sonido y escenario, y la duración épica del espectáculo. En su artículo, el presidente del festival Rob Byrne presenta un informe detallado del desarrollo y ejecución del espectáculo de 2012, incluyendo tanto elementos del contexto histórico, como detalles sobre la planificación, montaje, construcción y ejecución del proyecto.



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# Archives Films. Congo, Rwanda, Burundi (1912-1960)

Patricia van Schuylenbergh

Patricia van Schuylenbergh: Chef de travaux à la section Histoire de la période coloniale du Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (MRAC) à Tervuren et enseigne l'histoire de l'Afrique sub-saharienne à l'Université Catholique de Louvain.

## PATRIMOINE, HISTOIRE ET MÉMOIRE EN CONFLUENCE

Dans un contexte de profondes transformations économiques et sociales, la conservation et la transmission des héritages matériels et immatériels revêtent, dans la culture occidentale pour le moins, un enjeu mémoriel et identitaire de plus en plus affirmé. Le patrimoine constitue en effet le support privilégié de construction de mémoires collectives, permet d'inscrire les références identitaires dans l'espace et dans le temps, par delà les ruptures, les crises, les mutations. Le patrimoine est l'un des vecteurs privilégiés pour accéder au « conservatoire » des réalisations humaines, où se joue l'affirmation, la légitimation des groupes sociaux, des espaces régionaux ou des États-nations. La Belgique conserve, à cet égard, un patrimoine historique exceptionnel à propos de la République démocratique du Congo, ainsi que des Républiques du Rwanda et du Burundi, constitué durant sa présence dans ces pays jusqu'en 1960/1962. Parmi les nombreuses collections qui le composent, les fonds d'archives audiovisuelles sont emblématiques : ils constituent à la fois un héritage culturel important et une source encore inédite pour la recherche scientifique. Ceux-ci émanent, en effet, principalement, de cinéastes belges, engagés pour le compte de l'État ou agissant indépendamment, qui ont capturé

les images de ces territoires, de ces hommes, de ces paysages, de ces flores et faunes. Tout en travaillant dans le contexte particulier de cette période, ils sont les témoins des transformations parfois profondes que ceux-ci ont subies durant plusieurs décennies et dans tous les domaines. Certes, les films du cinéma colonial belge visaient dans leur ensemble à donner de la colonie et des deux royaumes sous tutelle la meilleure image possible, mais c'est précisément à ce titre qu'ils sont intéressants à notre époque : présentant un déroutant mélange de réalités irréfutables et de clichés liés à l'époque, ils constituent un témoignage *sui generis* sur une colonisation très singulière dans sa volonté opiniâtre et méthodique de transformer l'Afrique et les Africains.

De la volonté de valoriser cette collection en la diffusant prioritairement en Afrique centrale est né un vaste et ambitieux projet : « Film colonial. Congo, Rwanda, Burundi (1912-1960) ». Réalisé dans le cadre d'un partenariat entre trois institutions belges – Le Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (MRAC), la Cinémathèque royale de Belgique (CRB) et le Documentatie – en onderzoekcentrum voor Religie, Cultuur en Samenleving – K.U. Leuven (KADOC) – et six universités belges et africaines (Université Libre de Bruxelles [ULB], Katholieke Universiteit Leuven [KUL], Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis [FUSL], Université

de Kinshasa [UNIKIN], Université Nationale du Rwanda [Univ. Rwanda] et Université du Burundi [Univ. Burundi])<sup>1</sup>, ce projet poursuit un triple objectif : assurer la pérennité de ce patrimoine audiovisuel par le biais de la numérisation ; développer un appareil méthodologique destiné à encadrer ce patrimoine idéologiquement orienté ; le valoriser en le diffusant au travers d'échanges interuniversitaires axés sur l'histoire et la mémoire, tout en ouvrant au grand public les expériences et les connaissances acquises dans ce domaine. La nécessité fait sens. Durant ces trente dernières années, en effet, s'est produit un remarquable tournant quant à notre relation au passé relativement proche, qui a vu émerger le fait mémoriel dans l'espace public : l'histoire écrite pour le peuple est aussi devenue l'histoire « avec et par le peuple »<sup>2</sup>. La genèse du projet se situe bien au cœur de cette inflexion fondamentale qui « démocratise » le savoir et la mémoire, avec l'appui de moyens technologiques adéquats, permettant de « réveiller » les archives audiovisuelles issues de la colonisation belge et de donner un nouveau souffle à ces « belles endormies » qui attendaient d'être (ré)animées. Jusque là, la grande majorité des films coloniaux dits « officiels »<sup>3</sup> étaient conservés sur des pellicules de 16mm ou 35mm qui étaient voués à disparaître à plus ou moins long terme, en fonction de leur mode de condi-

tionnement et des pratiques plus ou moins adéquates mises en place pour les conserver. Au Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (MRAC), considérant l'urgence, les mesures ponctuelles de préservation<sup>4</sup> ne suffisaient toutefois pas. Le MRAC, la CRB et le KADOC, qui conservaient majoritairement ces archives, ont ainsi renforcé le projet initié par Samuel Tilman et Nicolas de Borman (Eklektik Productions et Culturea asbl) afin d'entreprendre une action conjointe de sauvegarde numérique de leurs collections respectives.

Grâce au soutien de divers bailleurs de fonds<sup>5</sup>, ce patrimoine agrégé en une collection commune allait pouvoir répondre à quatre priorités :

- La préservation : la garantie d'une conservation optimale de la collection pour pouvoir confronter les points de vue sur son contenu à l'épreuve du temps.
- La consultation : la mise à la disposition du plus grand nombre de témoignages historiques et esthétiques dans le but d'un enrichissement du savoir collectif.
- La diffusion : les moyens mis en œuvre pour s'assurer de toucher un public cible le plus diversifié possible.
- La valorisation des résultats des recherches effectuées sur sa base, afin de contribuer au développement durable de l'Afrique centrale et à une meilleure compréhension, passée et présente, de cette région : l'alimentation du débat essentiel relatif à l'histoire et à la mémoire des populations locales, le renouvellement des sources historiques accessibles au chercheur africain, la constitution d'un outil pédagogique de vulgarisation de l'histoire.

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1. Les principaux partenaires actifs du projet sont les suivants : Patricia Van Schuylenbergh et Karim Cham (MRAC), Gabrielle Claes, Erik Martens et Grace Winter (CRB), Jan De Maeyer, Luc Vints et Peter Heyrman (KADOC-KUL), Valérie Piette, Didier Devriese et Zoé Derleyn (ULB), Nathalie Tousignant (FUSL), Kiangu Sindani (UNIKIN), Alexandre Hatungimana (Univ. Burundi), Déogratias Byanafashe (Univ. Rwanda).

2. Comme l'a récemment souligné Paula Hamilton dans sa communication « The Changing Role of Memory and History in Public Life » du 29 septembre 2011, lors du colloque international « Le Passé et Nous. De la conscience historique au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle », CRSH-SSHRC – Université de Laval, Québec (29 septembre – 1 octobre 2011).

3. Nous proposons dans cette catégorie toutes les œuvres qui sont réalisées et produites dans un cadre officiel, c'est-à-dire, par des réalisateurs travaillant pour le compte du gouvernement métropolitain ou colonial, des parastataux, des missions religieuses, par des réalisateurs indépendants qui sont ponctuellement ou plus systématiquement engagés par ces divers producteurs pour réaliser des œuvres de commande, par toutes les œuvres achetées, commanditées ou produites par ces organes, par des réalisateurs indépendants qui réalisent et produisent des œuvres commanditées par des sociétés coloniales dans des buts de propagande ou de publicité pour des produits coloniaux et qui montrent une image « officielle » de la colonie ; les films réalisés pour des usages privés, les films de familles, les films de particuliers qui offrent une image globale de la colonie dans un but de propagande mais qui sont réalisés à fonds propre et pour un public familial ou restreint ne sont pas catégorisés.

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4. Il s'agissait notamment de la mise en dépôt de plusieurs copies à la Cinémathèque royale de Belgique, de transferts ponctuels de films sur des supports magnétiques puis numériques en fonction des disponibilités budgétaires ou des aléas des partenariats avec des réalisateurs, producteurs ou télévisions, de recherche de locaux adaptés pour conserver les pellicules dans les conditions les plus optimales possibles.

5. Le SPF Affaires étrangères pour le volet numérisation des archives (promoteur MRAC), la Commission universitaire pour le Développement (CUD) pour le volet valorisation (promoteur ULB), ainsi que, plus ponctuellement, de la Loterie Nationale, de la Fondation Belge de la Vacation et du Commissariat général aux Relations internationales de la Communauté française (CGRI).

## NUMÉRISER, DUPLIQUER ET TRANSMETTRE

La numérisation de ces archives offrait donc une réponse à la question de l'accès problématique, par les populations d'Afrique subsaharienne, aux sources historiques et aux héritages culturels conservés dans les ex-métropoles depuis la période coloniale. Il répondait aussi, partiellement, à l'épineuse question du rapatriement physique de ce type de documents dans leurs pays d'origine, la duplication permettant de toucher plusieurs publics à des moments et lieux divers. Ces enjeux étaient fondamentaux pour le MRAC qui, comme institution spécialisée, cherche, à travers ses travaux et projets scientifiques, ses expositions et ses partenariats, à stimuler l'intérêt de publics variés pour cette région, et de contribuer, par ce biais, à son développement durable. Outre ses compétences dans le domaine de la numérisation des archives, le MRAC fournit aussi l'accès, le contexte et l'interprétation de ces documents, autant pour enrichir les connaissances historiques<sup>6</sup> que pour alimenter le vaste chantier de mémoire amorcé par l'historiographie africaine<sup>7</sup>, où les attentes auprès milieu académiques et des professionnels du secteur audiovisuels sont très fortes. Comme le souligne l'historien et cinéaste Samuel Tilman, «le cinéma a toujours constitué un "espace de mémoire", un "lieu" incontournable où se développent des processus de constructions identitaires : identité des auteurs et des groupes sociaux dont ils émanent ; identité des publics confrontés à une interprétation percutante et affective de leurs réalités, ou de réalistes qui les concernent»<sup>8</sup>.

Avant de débiter la numérisation proprement dite de la collection agrégée, une phase préparatoire s'avérait indispensable et s'arti-

cula en plusieurs étapes : le transfert et la mise en dépôt des pellicules nitrate et acétate du MRAC à la CRB, afin de leur assurer une conservation optimale dans des locaux conçus à cet effet et qui lui manquaient<sup>9</sup>, la restauration de certaines pellicules, voire, le report de certaines d'entre elles sur du polyester, plus résistant que les précédentes. Enfin, un inventaire agrégé des 833 films rassemblés par le MRAC, la CRB et le KADOC fut réalisé sur une base commune reprenant, pour chaque film, des données de contenu (titre, réalisateur, année de réalisation, production, thèmes), des informations techniques (durée, métrage, support, couleur, son, nombre copies), une liste de mots clés ainsi que des informations spécifiques facilitant la numérisation à venir (existence de copies déjà numérisées, nombre copies, versions linguistiques, bande son séparée ou non, ayant droits connus ou pas).

Dans une seconde étape, un comité scientifique composé de membres issus de ces institutions choisit les films à numériser prioritairement en fonction, non seulement des ressources financières allouées, des critères techniques – qui écartaient d'office ceux qui ne pouvaient être soumis à un transfert digital pour raison de détériorations physico-chimiques trop avancées – mais aussi, et surtout, des critères objectifs<sup>10</sup>. Il fallait, en outre, éluder l'importante question des droits d'auteurs. Une politique fut mise en place à cet égard, qui définissait et balisait le cadre légal d'utilisation et de diffusion des films d'archives et l'assortissait de plusieurs instruments permettant de protéger le plus efficacement possible les institutions propriétaires ou dépo-

6. Patricia Van Schuylenbergh, «Les Collections audiovisuelles du Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale à l'heure du numérique», dans Françoise Hiraux (ed.), *Les Archives audiovisuelles. Politiques et pratiques dans la société de l'information*, Éditions Academia, Louvain, 2009, p. 118.
7. Les partenaires de ce projet ont contribué à alimenter le débat. Voir par exemple Déogratias Byanafashe (dir.), *Les Défis de l'Historiographie rwandaise*, Kigali, 2004, ou les travaux de Kiangu Sindani aux côtés de plusieurs confrères africains du «Réseau francophone de recherche sur la mémoire» épaulé par le Professeur Bogumil Jewsiewicki.
8. Samuel Tilman, Présentation générale, dans Patricia Van Schuylenbergh et Mathieu Zana Aziza Etambala (dir.), *Patrimoine d'Afrique centrale. Archives Films. Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, 1912-1960*, MRAC, Tervuren, 2010, p. 9.

9. Il ne possède pas de locaux appropriés qui puissent garantir des normes de conservation dignes du nom, notamment au niveau de la température et de l'humidité de l'air.

10. Les critères de sélection furent les suivants :  
– temporel : les différentes périodes couvertes sont représentées : toutes avant 1945, sélection après 1945, tenant compte des critères suivants :  
– réalisateurs les plus représentatifs : Genval, Cauvin, De Boe  
– géographique : les différentes régions ; villes/campagne ; les grandes villes (tous les films concernant le Ruanda-Urundi car quantitativement moins nombreux)  
– intérêt ethnographique, esthétique, sociologique...  
– reportages d'actualités  
– genres particuliers : œuvres missionnaires, de « propagande », films éducatifs et de fiction  
– « chef-d'œuvre » : outre les différentes catégories citées, les films qui doivent absolument se retrouver dans la sélection finale pour des raisons alliant intérêt esthétique et cinématographique.



Prise de vue pour la réalisation d'un film éducatif destiné aux autochtones



Séance de cinéma en plein air organisée par le Service de l'Information du Gouvernement général



sitaires des archives, et leurs ayant droits respectifs, de toutes malversations ou effractions aux lois en la matière.

Quelque 178 films réalisés entre 1912 et 1960 sortirent du lot. En collaboration avec ce comité, des experts techniques furent consultés pour déterminer les supports numériques qui pouvaient le mieux répondre aux besoins spécifiques de tous les partenaires et à leurs objectifs : haute définition (HD Cam) pour la conservation physique ; disques durs pour le transfert et la duplication auprès d'utilisateurs professionnels (Appel Pro Res) ou sur DVD (MPEG-2) ; disques durs (MPEG-1) pour la diffusion sur internet ; DVD pour le travail de recherche. Ces choix étaient fondamentaux car ils déterminaient l'évolution de toute la chaîne technique de production et ses retombées pratiques au niveau de l'utilisation. Des missions de préparation dans les pays africains partenaires en 2008 et 2009 permirent de mieux évaluer les attentes des partenaires locaux, les possibles lieux d'hébergement des copies numérisées, et de présenter avec les partenaires locaux une série de projections « test cases » de films coloniaux auprès de publics divers (grand public, public universitaire, public de paroisse) afin de cerner leurs sensibilités et remarques.

Les disques durs et des supports DVD furent transmis dès juin 2010 aux universités africaines et belges partenaires, auxquelles se sont plus récemment associées les universités de Lubumbashi et de Kisangani, participant de la sorte, de manière symbolique, à la célébration du cinquantenaire de l'indépendance de la République démocratique du Congo, au partage d'une histoire et d'un patrimoine culturel qui fut, à un moment donné, commun.

Cette étape fondamentale marquait la transition entre les phases de numérisation et de valorisation du projet. Sur place, tout un patrimoine retrouvait son pays d'origine et (re)commençait une vie nouvelle ; il restait à lui donner du sens par les traitements multiples qui allaient en être fait : visionnage sur les écrans d'ordinateur, projection en salle ou en plein air, étude de son contenu, de sa forme et de son contexte, débat d'idées sur sa base.

De la volonté de valoriser cette collection en la diffusant prioritairement auprès des collègues scientifiques africains qui pouvait l'encadrer et la contextualiser, un réseau interuniversitaire<sup>11</sup> s'est ainsi mis en place, dans le cadre d'un Projet Interuniversitaire Ciblé (PIC) de la Commission Universitaire pour le Développement (CUD). Celui-ci vise, non seulement à fournir des moyens financiers, techniques et informatiques pour conserver et utiliser ces archives sur place, mais aussi à renforcer les collaborations scientifiques entre la Belgique et l'Afrique centrale par des échanges de savoirs et de personnes. C'est ainsi que des partenaires belges ont organisé des rencontres et réunions à Kinshasa et à Lubumbashi, agrémentées de séances de projections de films d'archives<sup>12</sup> et encadrées par des professeurs congolais et belges confrontant le passé colonial aux questions sur la mémoire urbaine et industrielle, minière notamment.

Parallèlement à cela, les partenaires africains du projet se sont rendus à plusieurs reprises en Belgique pour participer à des séminaires de travail préparés par leurs collègues belges et qui portaient sur les méthodologies de l'image en général, sur la problématique des sources et les critères pertinents pour analyser les archives audiovisuelles en situation coloniale<sup>13</sup>. De même, plusieurs stagiaires congolais, rwandais et burundais sont régulièrement accueillis en Belgique pour une durée de 3 à 6 mois afin, sur le plan théorique, de participer activement à des séminaires bi-mensuels<sup>14</sup> portant sur le visionnage de films, les méthodologies à appliquer pour lire et décrypter les images en mouvement et l'analyse critique de

11. « Valorisation de la mémoire filmée de la période coloniale : renforcement des capacités pédagogiques en sciences humaines / Mise en place d'un réseau interuniversitaire sur la mémoire de l'Afrique centrale », sous la direction de Valérie Piette (ULB).

12. Notamment au Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles à Kinshasa et à la Halle de l'Étoile à Lubumbashi.

13. Plusieurs rencontres se sont déroulées successivement au MRAC, au KADOC, au FUSL et à l'ULB, notamment au cours de journées d'études et de colloques internationaux, dont « Congo belge. Regards croisés (1908-1960). Nouvelles sources, nouvelles approches, nouveaux objets » (Bruxelles, ULB-FUSL, 10-12 février 2011).

14. Ceux-ci se déroulent entre le 26 septembre et la mi-décembre 2011 à l'ULB (Département des Sciences Humaines).

ce patrimoine et, sur le plan pratique, d'alimenter une base de données générale sur la collection<sup>15</sup> qui servira de support à la création d'un site web du projet. Sont aussi envisagés, lors de ces échanges, la nécessité de préparer en Afrique centrale des cours et séminaires destinés à présenter auprès des étudiants des départements d'Histoire, des Sciences sociales et de Communication, les questions que soulève ce patrimoine, d'organiser des projections publiques (émissions télévisuelles, cinémas en salle ou en plein air), d'encourager les travaux de recherche dans le cadre des maîtrises, DEA ou doctorats ainsi que les publications de la communauté scientifique de ces pays. En clôture du projet, un colloque international s'est tenu en avril dernier à l'Université du Burundi (Bujumbura) sur le thème « Afrique belge : Entre mémoire et histoire de l'expérience coloniale. Regards croisés sur le patrimoine filmique » qui a réuni stagiaires, chercheurs, étudiants et chefs de file du projet afin d'y présenter les principaux résultats de cette collaboration internationale, les avancées significatives pour la recherche et les méthodologies audiovisuelles ainsi que les pistes possibles de financement pour poursuivre la numérisation de cette collection, les films réalisés après les indépendances, notamment.

Conjointement à ces activités, plusieurs initiatives annexes ont inauguré le mouvement de valorisation de cette collection. Un premier ouvrage collectif a ainsi été publié en mai 2010.<sup>16</sup> Divisé en deux parties, l'ouvrage contient, d'une part, des articles de fonds rédigés par des contributeurs spécialisés qui offrent un large panorama sur l'histoire du cinéma colonial, des approches thématiques et des essais méthodologiques portant sur l'analyse des images en mouvement en contexte colonial, et, d'autre part, un catalogue chronologique raisonné et illustré décrivant les films numérisés (contenu, indications techniques, mots-clés). Vingt films accompagnent la publication et sont répartis sur quatre DVD

illustrant quatre grands thèmes : la diversité culturelle ; les ressources naturelles, minières et aquatiques ; le développement économique et urbain ; l'éducation et la création artistique. Prioritairement destinée aux enseignants, chercheurs et étudiants belges, africains et internationaux, cette publication fournit un instrument de haute vulgarisation scientifique à usage pédagogique et didactique.

Facilitées par la numérisation et stimulées par les commémorations du cinquantenaire de l'indépendance congolaises, d'autres réalisations belgo-congolaises ont emboîté le pas. En collaboration avec le MRAC, le Centre d'Études et de Documentation Guerre et Sociétés contemporaines (CEGES) et la VRT (Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroeporganisatie), la CRB a édité un livret/DVD trilingue<sup>17</sup> assorti de 15 films réalisés par les trois cinéastes « coloniaux »<sup>18</sup> les plus importants du monde laïc<sup>19</sup> et dont la vie et la filmographie sont commentées : Ernest Genval, Gérard De Boe, André Cauvin. Ceux-ci illustrent différentes périodes et des aspects parfois méconnus de l'ex-colonie belge entre 1936 et 1955, année de tournage du fameux *Bwana Kitoko*, le surnom congolais du roi Baudouin que Cauvin et son équipe suivirent durant son premier voyage au cœur du continent africain. Parmi d'autres encore, de nombreuses images de ces réalisateurs ont été largement utilisées pour illustrer la série documentaire/fiction en trois épisodes intitulée *Kongo (1510-2010)*<sup>20</sup>, qui retrace l'histoire de la République démocratique du Congo et ses liens avec l'Europe et la Belgique depuis

15. Cette base de données consiste à rédiger les fiches descriptives des films (analyse de contenu), à fournir les contextes de production et de réception des films, à récolter des métadonnées les concernant dans des collections apparentées.

16. Patricia Van Schuylenbergh et Mathieu Zana Aziza Etambala (dir.), *Patrimoine d'Afrique centrale. Archives Films. Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, 1912-1960*, MRAC, Tervuren, 2010.

17. *Belgisch Congo belge, gefilmd door/Filmé par/Filmed by Gérard de Boe, André Cauvin & Ernest Genval*, CRB, Bruxelles, 2010, 2 DVD + livret de 109 pages.

Dans le livret qui accompagne les DVD, la vie et l'œuvre de ces réalisateurs sont documentés par Patricia Van Schuylenbergh (MRAC), Florence Gillet (CEGES) et Grace Winter (CRB).

18. Le terme « colonial » s'entend davantage comme une caractéristique que comme une origine géographique. En effet, si Gérard De Boe à vécu plusieurs années au Congo belge et y a, entre 1927 et 1948, travaillé en tant qu'agent colonial, réalisant, après coup, des films pour le compte de l'État, Genval et Cauvin n'y ont voyagé et vécu que durant le temps nécessaire à de la réalisation de leurs œuvres.

19. Le cinéma missionnaire tient également une place importante dans la filmographie coloniale mais ne figure pas dans ce cas-ci.

20. *Kongo (1510-2010). 500 ans de colonisation, 50 ans d'indépendance au Congo*, série documentaire en 3 épisodes, Eklektik Productions/Off World, Bruxelles, 2010 (ép. 1: *La course effrénée (1510-1908)*, réal. Samuel Tilman ; ép. 2: *Les grandes illusions (1908-1960)*, réal. Daniel Cattier ; ép. 3: *Le géant inachevé (1960-2010)*, réal. Isabelle Christiaens). Il existe aussi un long-métrage documentaire, en version anglaise, *Black Heart, White Men*, réal. Samuel Tilman, 2011.

le débarquement des Portugais au royaume Kongo au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'à l'arrivée au pouvoir de Joseph Kabila. Cette réalisation d'envergure fut possible grâce à la mise à disposition des archives audiovisuelles numérisées inédites dans le cadre du présent projet ainsi que des collections historiques de photographies, de cartes anciennes et d'archives privées conservées au Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (MRAC).

### PATRIMONIALISER UN CAPITAL CULTUREL COMMUN

D'emblée, cette collection audiovisuelle largement inédite et originale constitue donc un héritage patrimonial non négligeable, tant pour la Belgique que pour l'Afrique centrale. Mais ce sont surtout les actions menées et les engagements pris pour la sauvegarder, la transmettre et la valoriser qui lui permettent, cette fois, d'acquérir une forme de « capital culturel », à l'instar d'un « capital économique »<sup>21</sup> normatif lorsqu'il est question d'héritage patrimonial.

C'est dans cet esprit que le projet décrit ci-dessus prend tout son sens. La numérisation de la collection permet sa sauvegarde en tant qu'archive ainsi que sa diffusion comme objet d'études ; sa valorisation, quant à elle, la dynamise par la biais de la démarche historique qui, grâce à l'apport de nouveaux outils technologiques, de base de données qui reconstruisent les « archives » des films (entretiens, rapports de censure, traces écrites du réalisateur, du monteur, photographies de tournage, etc.) et qui les confrontent avec les usages dont ils ont été l'objet *a posteriori* (occurrence de publications, discours critiques, réception de l'œuvre, etc.), permet de comprendre et de mettre à jour ses fonctionnements. Comme le soulignent, à cet égard, Rémy Besson et Audrey Leblanc : « Cette approche résolument pragmatique et empirique implique de se concentrer sur des études de cas, ce qui présente l'avantage de pouvoir, par ailleurs, circonscrire des corpus précis de recherche. L'histoire des objets visuels ne peut, dès lors,

pas être pensée comme étant autonome : elle prend place dans l'histoire culturelle du visuel et dans une histoire avec le visuel »<sup>22</sup>.

Dès lors, la question de la transmission patrimoniale est tout aussi cruciale. En (re) découvrant les films réalisés durant une période révolue, les pays partenaires pourront effectuer un nécessaire travail de mémoire qui participe aux débats sur la reconstruction historique de la région et sur la formation identitaire. Loin d'être une survivance, cette mémoire n'est pas seulement un « outil de préhension et de compréhension du monde »<sup>23</sup>, elle délimite aussi « le royaume de sa propre vie par rapport à "l'autre monde", le monde des autres »<sup>24</sup>. C'est donc bien la pertinence d'un dialogue interculturel qui est ici en jeu : la perception et la représentation, à travers les films, d'une Afrique coloniale, au prisme d'un regard africain contemporain, qui lui-même se livre au regard de l'ex-colonie. Au delà de ces jeux de miroirs, cette collection participe de manière concrète au désenclavement et au renouvellement des sources historiques accessibles au chercheur africain. Ces films constituent donc un outil pédagogique incontournable de vulgarisation de l'histoire, un médiateur efficace entre le savoir historique et le grand public. Ils forment, enfin, un matériel didactique novateur pour des étudiants en sciences humaines, de plus en plus fréquemment confrontés à l'image dans le cadre de leur recherche mais aussi dans celui de la société en général. En guise de conclusion, le mot-valise utilisé par Edgar Morin dans son essai anthropologique sur le cinéma résume à lui seul la vocation du projet : il s'agit d'apprendre à être et à devenir un « spect-acteur »<sup>25</sup>.

21. Brian Graham, "Heritage as Knowledge: Capital or Culture?", *Urban Studies* (2002), vol. 39, n° 5-6, p. 1003-1017.

22. Rémy Besson et Audrey Leblanc, « La Part de l'Introduction », *Conserveries mémorielles, #6/ 2009*, mis en ligne le 26 décembre 2009, consulté le 14 septembre 2011. <http://cm.revues.org/336>.

23. Jean-Louis Triaud, « Lieux de mémoire et passés composés », dans Jean-Pierre Chrétien et Jean-Louis Triaud (eds.), *Histoire d'Afrique. Les enjeux de mémoire*, Paris, Karthala, 1999, p. 11.

24. Voir à ce propos le texte fondateur « Historical Thinking as Intercultural Discourse » de Jörn Rüsen, dans J. Rüsen (ed.), *Western Historical Thinking. An Intercultural Debate*, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2002, p. 1.

25. Edgar Morin, *Le Cinéma ou l'Homme imaginaire. Essai d'anthropologie*, Genève, Gonthier, 1965.

The exceptionally valuable historical heritage maintained by Belgium on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the republics of Rwanda and Burundi, was built during the country's presence in Central Africa until 1960. Among these collections, the audiovisual archives are unique not only because of their important cultural heritage, but also because they are an unmatched resource for scientific research. Most of the films were produced by Belgian filmmakers, either independent or State-sponsored, who captured images of these territories, peoples, landscapes, and wildlife. The cineastes occasionally witnessed profound changes over decades and in all areas as they worked in the singular context of the colonial period. The films from Belgian colonial cinema were created to provide the best image possible of the colony and the two territories, and it is for precisely this reason that they are relevant today. They present a disconcerting blend of irrefutable truths and era-bound clichés, forming a one-of-a-kind testimonial of a colonization that was highly particular in its relentless and methodical quest to transform Africa and Africans.

The desire to enhance the collection's value by striving for its dissemination in Central Africa led to a vast and ambitious project, "Colonial Film. Congo, Rwanda, Burundi (1912-1960)". Pursued under the framework of a partnership among three Belgian archival institutions with films from and about the region – the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA), the Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique/Cinématek, and the Documentatie – en onderzoekcentrum voor Religie, Cultuur en Samenleving – K.U. Leuven (KADOC) – as well as six Belgian and African universities (Université libre de Bruxelles, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, Université de Kinshasa, Université Nationale du Rwanda, and Université du Burundi), the project has a threefold purpose: to ensure the long-term survival of this audiovisual heritage through digitization; to develop a methodological tool to frame this ideologically-biased heritage; and to enhance its value by distributing it through inter-university exchanges centring on history and memory, while providing the general public with access to the experience and knowledge acquired in this field.

En razón de su presencia en África Central hasta 1960, Bélgica conserva un patrimonio histórico excepcional tanto en lo referente a la República Democrática del Congo, cómo sobre las Repúblicas de Ruanda y Burundi. Entre sus numerosas colecciones, los fondos de archivos audiovisuales son de una originalidad excepcional por su doble naturaleza de patrimonio cultural importante, como de fuente inédita para la investigación científica. Estos fondos fueron principalmente elaborados por cineastas belgas que, trabajando para el Estado belga o por cuenta propia, consiguieron captar imágenes de sus hombres y territorios, así como de la fauna y flora de sus paisajes. Habiendo trabajado en el contexto singular de este periodo, fueron testigos de las transformaciones profundas sufridas durante varias décadas en todos sus aspectos. Si es cierto que estos filmados de cine colonial belga tenían como objetivo proporcionar una imagen positiva de la colonia y de los dos reinos bajo su tutela, es precisamente por esta razón que su interés es de gran actualidad, ya que presentan una imagen sorprendente. Esta mezcla de realidades irrefutables con estereotipos de la época, constituyen un testimonio *sui generis* de este tipo de colonización, cuya singularidad radicaba en la voluntad obstinada y metódica de transformar África y los africanos.

La voluntad de poner de relieve esta colección a través de una difusión prioritaria en África Central ha dado lugar a un ambicioso proyecto de grandes proporciones titulado "Film Colonial: Congo, Rwanda, Burundi (1912-1960)". Este ha sido realizado en el cuadro de un acuerdo entre tres centros de archivos belgas que poseen filmados de esta región: el Museo Real de África Central (MRAC), la Cinemateca Real de Bélgica (Cinématek) y el Centro de investigación y documentación sobre Religión, Cultura y Sociedad (KADOC, KUL Leuven) y seis universidades belgas y africanas (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, Université de Kinshasa, Université Nationale du Rwanda et Université du Burundi). Dicho proyecto persigue un triple objetivo que harán que la opinión pública tenga acceso a las experiencias y conocimientos resultantes de la investigación: asegurar la perennidad del patrimonio audiovisual a través su digitalización, desarrollar un aparato metodológico destinado a contextualizar un patrimonio con claras funciones ideológicas, y por último, valorizarlo a través de su difusión en forma de intercambios universitarios ligados a la historia y a la memoria.

# Molly Dineen, British Documentarian

Donald McWilliams

Donald McWilliams: filmmaker and teacher (Montréal)

The relationship of documentary film to truth is something that concerns most documentarians. There are those who immodestly believe their films are the truth; but the more thoughtful would agree with Frederick Wiseman, the master of the observational documentary: "The film represents a report on what I've found, a very subjective report, I must tell you; for I wouldn't know how to make an objective film..."<sup>1</sup> Many documentarians are happy to make a report; but there are others who want to change the world. An ideal, but unlikely. Wiseman again put it best when he said, "You're competing in ... the market place of ideas. And if the film does anything at all, it contributes to a sharing and then a process of discussion about the issues, out of which different people will evolve different solutions."<sup>2</sup> A film can reinforce the opinions of those who share its views, or it might sway those sitting on the fence; but it can also reinforce the views of those who do not agree. There are potentially as many interpretations as there are viewers.

Molly Dineen, a British documentarian, is driven by the need to understand the world in which she lives, and to be part of the debate. Dineen is solidly in that tradition where we find filmmakers such as Michael Rubbo of

the National Film Board of Canada, who insert themselves as observers, even participants, in their search for the "story". Rubbo was frequently seen on camera, but in Dineen's case we don't see her – she is in fact behind the camera, shooting. But we hear her voice, questioning, prodding her interviewees. "Interviewees" is not really the right word; we do not see her characters in a neutral interview setting. They are in their world, talking about it with her. Sometimes we feel we are witnessing a soliloquy, when suddenly Dineen's voice comes from behind the camera, moving the action to a new level of insight. Sometimes she is a witness to events, in the observational manner, but overall it is the relationship between Dineen and her subjects that drives the films.

Born in Canada in 1959, and brought up in Birmingham, England, Dineen loved photography, and studied it after high school, first at the Bourneville School of Art and then at the London College of Printing. Photographing people is what interested her. This led to film courses at the National Film and Television School, where in 1985 she made a remarkable student film, *Home from the Hill*. She went to Kenya with a friend, Harry Hook,<sup>3</sup> to visit his father Hilary, taking with her a spring-wind

1. Donald McWilliams, "Frederick Wiseman", *Film Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 1, Fall 1970, p. 20.  
2. McWilliams, "Frederick Wiseman", p. 20.

3. Harry Hook (born 1960) also became a filmmaker. In 1987, he made an excellent dramatic feature about the 1950s Mau Mau period in Kenya, *The Kitchen Toto*.





Colonel Hilary Hook and Molly Dineen

16mm camera and a tape recorder. Dineen and Hook arrived at a critical moment: Hilary Hook had just been given notice by his African landlord to leave his home near Mt. Kenya. So the film became about that departure and his new life back in a small town in south-west England. Despite being a student film, *Home from the Hill* was a success and was picked up by the BBC for its *40 Minutes* strand. The film was an hour long, and 20 minutes had to be cut. The process was a painful one for Dineen; there were big conflicts with the editor, who disliked the presence of the director in the cutting room.

The two versions of *Home from the Hill* are available in a set of DVDs released by the British Film Institute in 2011, and make for a fascinating comparison, a real plus for film school courses. The re-cutting is not just excision of 20 minutes, but a restructuring. BBC Television wanted a strong scene at the beginning, a hook that would keep the viewers watching, so a scene from near the end of Dineen's original 1985 student film became the opening scene of the 1987 television version: An annual gathering of ex-cavalry in London's Hyde Park, a remembrance for fallen comrades in two World Wars; the veterans are dressed in dark suits,

with bowler hats, umbrellas, and medals. It is something to which viewers can immediately relate and bring their own conceptions. For some they are heroes, for some they are a visual expression of the ruling class, and, for others, a collection of Colonel Blimps. We briefly meet retired Lieutenant-Colonel Hilary Hook. Under all this there is an introductory commentary by Molly Dineen. It then cuts to Kenya six months earlier: Hook is on his verandah, vodka near at hand, musing on his life and eviction by the African landlord. The TV version, in a sense, becomes a flashback.

These musings are cut not just of content, but of pauses, the natural rhythms of Hook's conversation. A TV habit, and a critical point: pauses and rhythms tell us much about a character. Walter Murch, the great Hollywood editor, wrote a book, *In the Blink of an Eye*. His theory is that the blinks of a person's eye tell us much about the inner self, the way a person thinks. So his cutting of dialogue is based upon those rhythms. Dineen's original student version begins with a shot of the house in Kenya, Hook prone in bed, smoking, the cooking of breakfast in the kitchen by an African, Hook on the verandah musing on his life in

Kenya, culminating with his thoughts on his coming departure. These musings feel uncut and Dineen has kept Hook's natural rhythm of speaking. The student version presents us with an unknown person in his environment. Dineen begins to unfold the mystery, to take us into Hook's world. Any preconceptions are softened by Dineen's reticence, her respect for her character. This process of discovery is at the heart of her work; "truth" is not what it may first seem, people and life are multi-faceted. Later in the film we see Hook in England, struggling in the kitchen to open a can of ravioli, ultimately helped by Dineen's sound recordist, Sarah Jeans. We laugh at him, but also with him, because we are coming to understand him. Hook's life, including his army career, unfolds naturally in the film's linear structure – the unfolding of the story is also the filmmaker's journey. Dineen's subsequent films have maintained this approach, albeit with increasing sophistication.

Following the success of *Home from the Hill*, Dineen returned to Kenya and filmed *My African Farm* (1988), featuring Mrs. Sylvia Richardson, a widow and former neighbour of Hilary Hook. Richardson was a difficult character, the settler who saw herself as partially carrying the white man's burden, in turns aggressive and kind with her six African servants and their families and friends. At the end of the day, one may not like Mrs. Richardson, but one also does not dislike her. Dineen has led us to why she is what she is and to be tolerant of her, as her servants are. As Dineen stresses in interviews, she is not interested in "stitching up her subjects".

After these two films, Dineen's canvas broadened. Over the next 20 years she made a series of films which deal with institutions undergoing change. Wiseman took his camera into institutions and filmed how they work, as a fly-on-the-wall. What interests Dineen, however, is what is happening to the people in a changing institution, what they think and how they act. Her role as behind-the-camera interlocutor becomes more pronounced; we become aware of how a filmmaker becomes part of the story, often affecting what we see happening in front of us, as she prods the subjects into rumination and analysis. We also learn the

difficulties of filmmaking, of just how much work is involved gaining access and winning the confidence of the characters.

The first of these "institutional" films was *Heart of the Angel* (1989), filmed at the Angel Underground station in London. We see not just the daily operations on the surface, where nothing seems to work and the staff seems more disgruntled than the paying public – we are also taken into the Dante's Inferno of the Underground at night, when the power is turned off and gangs of men and women clean and repair the tunnels. At first the workers don't want to talk on camera, ashamed of their work in Victorian conditions. But Dineen gradually earns their confidence: perhaps most remarkable of all, that of a long-time ticket-seller, who apparently wouldn't let her into his little cabin without all the proper signed permissions. But eventually she captures a soliloquy from him, as he gazes out of his booth, sometimes turning his head to her camera eye: "You don't ask to be born, and when you are, you are just waiting to die. You are not, you are, and you are not, and that's the end of it. I want to know why."

That question hovers in the background of *The Ark*, a 4-part BBC documentary broadcast in 1993 which won the BAFTA Award as best series. In 1990, a journalist friend of Dineen's told her about the crisis at the London Zoo. Founded by the London Zoological Society in 1826, it was losing money by the late 1980s, and closure seemed likely. The administration was planning a huge reorganization, with the firing of keepers and removal of animals, and a switch to a more market-oriented approach. The opposition feared that the Zoo's scientific programmes would be sacrificed and that it would become a mere theme park filled only with animals the public liked, such as pandas. Dineen decided to make a film. Its production coincided with a period during which the BBC was itself going through a tumultuous reorganization, as it became more "management oriented". Dineen somehow got lost in the shuffle, and was happily able to shoot for 9 months. She shot over 100,000 feet of film with her super-16mm camera, documenting the highly-charged events at the Zoo, followed by a year of editing. Apparently editor Edward



*The Ark*, a 4-part BBC documentary broadcast in 1993

Roberts and Molly Dineen had many battles as they carved out the film, which had a shooting ratio of more than 20 to 1.

The result is faultlessly structured filmmaking, brilliantly cut as the film interweaves the daily life of keepers and animals, the general meetings of the Society, management meetings, and meetings of a reform group made up of keepers and Society members. Access was not easy. There is a natural suspicion of a person running around with a camera, accompanied by a recordist with a microphone on a long pole, especially when this partially-hidden camera person asks probing questions and interrupts you in your daily work. In the case of management, access was more formal and restricted; but with most of the keepers and animals it became an everyday activity. There is little doubt where Dineen's sympathy lies. Management gets its way in the end: more than a third of the keepers and animals go – but so does the Director-General. Oddly enough, it is only when he is awaiting his fate that he lets Dineen into his office to talk at length with him. In exploring the relationship between keepers and animals, and the keep-

ers' relationship with management, Dineen was faced with the danger of anthropomorphizing the animals, an easy way to gain sympathy and misrepresent the situation. Nonetheless, it is clear in some instances that there is a communication between the creatures and keepers. Never more so than in the final reel, as we witness the heartbreak of a keeper nursing a koala bear dying of cancer.

*The Ark* was naturally seen by many as a mirror of the state of the nation, with values and questions facing society as a whole. Even though we are glued to the struggle being played out within the walls of the Zoo, we are always conscious of an underlying question: what sort of institutions do we want, and what values should they reflect?

The next institution Dineen took on was the British Army, in a series of three films about the Welsh Guards in Northern Ireland. *In the Company of Men* (1995) presented huge problems of access. As Dineen pointed out in an interview, she sometimes wonders if the people she approaches for permissions ever look at her films, or her track record. With *In the*



*The Ark* won the BAFTA Award for best television documentary series

*Company of Men*, she was really only half in; even then the regimental Sergeant Major restricted her access, and we sometimes feel the soldiers deflecting her probings. But her tenacity does pay off, ultimately illuminating a soldier's life in a dangerous posting. After the series was released, Dineen received a letter from the head of the General Staff, an oblique apology for not having trusted her more.

Access was again a problem in Dineen's next institutional film, *The Lords' Tale* (2002). In 1999, the New Labour Government continued with the long-term reform of the unelected House of Lords. The intention was to make it an elected upper chamber, rather than one based upon inheritance and political appointment. A bill passed in the House of Commons would remove all but 92 of the inherited lords. It then went to the House of Lords for debate. In the 1997 election, Dineen had made a short commissioned film on behalf of the New Labour party. This experience had sparked her curiosity in the democratic process, and she wondered if there was a case to be made for the hereditary peerage in Parliament as a

wise second voice for potential legislation. So she decided to make a film about the events around the vote.

The New Labour members of the Lords were untrusting of her intentions, so she was restricted to filming with non-Labour lords in corridors, lobbies, and offices. In time Dineen earned more trust and was able to film more widely, at times in the actual Lords' chamber. But on the whole we have a film of great intimacy, shot in the hallowed halls, with lords caught on the run, talking in striking intimacy. With her unerring eye, Dineen finds fascinating characters in the Conservative opposition, not at all the duffers living on huge estates that the public imagines. With great wit, she digs deep into the story of British democracy.

Her place in the proceedings onscreen is greater than in her earlier films. Her point-of-view is more apparent, and this heightens the realization that documentary is partly a manufactured world, an interpreted actuality; but Dineen does believe there has to be a balance between what she wants to say and what her subjects want. In the closing minutes of the film, Dineen breaks her rule and leaves the institution and goes to the farm of Lord Romney, an 89-year-old who has yet to make his maiden speech, "but they want my vote". He makes trenchant comments on democracy.

*Romney:* "The way democracy works – it's so irresponsible."

*Dineen:* "Irresponsible?!"

*Romney:* "Yes. People say what's he done for me, or I don't like the look of his face. I wouldn't trust that fellow, you've heard people say that?"

*Dineen:* "Yes."

*Romney:* "Well, is that the way to use your vote?"

In *The Lie of the Land* (2007), her next institutional subject, Dineen continues where she left off. What is the responsibility of those of us who benefit from or use institutions? Initially to be a film about the banning of foxhunting, it evolves into an examination of the relationship between modern urban society and the countryside. Dineen accompanies a head huntsman as he goes to collect dead animals for food for the hounds – or so she thinks. She witnesses him



visiting a farm and shooting a perfectly healthy calf. Horrified, she discovers it is because the calf is the wrong breed; it does not give the sort of meat the supermarkets want, so must be destroyed. Dineen eschews shock in her films – she believes it is too easy a way to get the viewer’s attention. But in this film, she felt she could not avoid it. In *The Ark*, we sensed the animals as creatures with their own world. In *The Lie of the Land*, Dineen takes us further into that world, and into the understanding that animals aren’t dumb creatures, that they sense or know the end when it comes. Dineen uncovers what is happening to countryside as it becomes more industrialized, bureaucratized, and as incomers buy the farms for homes. Her message is as it was at the close of *The Lords’ Tale*: as a farmer puts it near the end of the film, “We are all in it together.”

Dineen’s early working method was to shoot her films with an accompanying sound recordist. But in the late 1990s Dineen began to use small digital cameras. *Gerri* (1999, about Geri Halliwell, a former member of the pop group the Spice Girls), *The Lords’ Tale*, and *The Lie of the Land* were shot with a video camera with built-in sound. Dineen is concerned how this is affecting her films. The very way of handling the camera changes the relationship between filmmaker and events. She misses the accompanying sound recordist not only for reasons of quality but also for her need of that second person as companion and sounding-board. Yet the physical intimacy of some of the conversations in *The Lords’ Tale* would not have been possible with a super-16mm camera. All of these remarkable documentaries were released on DVD by the British Film Institute in 2011.<sup>4</sup>

I once spoke to a man who had been a key interviewee in a British TV documentary. He told me he had been very conscious that the filmmaker was not interested in him as a

person. He was in the film to serve the filmmaker’s intentions and preconceived ideas, a mere part of the narrative line. Subjects know when they are being “stitched up”, and keep up their guard. But, in Dineen’s work, the contrary is true. Most of her subjects recognize her integrity and determination, and that she is there on a journey, seeking to understand. And they respond – which brings me back to the beginning of this piece, and the comments of Frederick Wiseman.

Do these documentaries of Molly Dineen change anything? Yes – perhaps not fundamentally, but they become part of the “market place of ideas”, and make viewers think. Speaking personally, *The Lie of the Land* often looms up in my mind when I enter a food store; probably in some subtle way, it has changed my buying habits. I am sure that other viewers are affected in the same way. Since Dineen works in television, her films are already part of the folk memory of television. Documentary filmmakers rarely have that privilege of re-runs accorded to the makers of fiction films. Yet the issues in these films have a relevance long past their screening date. In 2011 a new panda was delivered to the Edinburgh Zoo, with the same hoopla as the arrival of the panda at London Zoo in 1993. And a debate about reform of the House of Lords has just erupted again in British political circles. Dineen’s examination of institutional practice and her suggestion that we, the public, have a responsibility *vis-à-vis* that practice is what gives Dineen’s films their relevance and value outside the moment when they were made. Like Wiseman, Molly Dineen’s strength lies in her fearless subjectivity.

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4. The BFI’s *The Molly Dineen Collection* DVD releases contain most of her work to date: (1) Vol. 1, 2-DVD set, *Home from the Hill* (1987 BBC TV version), *Home from the Hill* (1985 Director’s Cut student film), *My African Farm*, *Heart of the Angel*, *In the Company of Men*; (2) Vol. 2, 1-DVD, *The Ark* (1993), 4-part BBC TV documentary series; (3) Vol. 3, 2-DVD set, *Gerri*, *The Lords’ Tale*, *The Lie of the Land*, plus *Party Election Broadcast for the Labour Party* [Tony Blair] (1997). The three DVD volumes have excellent extras – interviews with Dineen and colleagues, director’s commentary, outtakes, unseen footage, and informative booklets.



Le style très personnel de la documentariste britannique Molly Dineen ne l'a pas empêchée d'être produite par la télévision. Au contraire: son premier film, *Home from the Hill*, évoquant le retour d'un colono britannique natif du Kenya en Angleterre, remporta un succès considérable. Les films suivants traitent de sujets plus généraux, en particulier de l'évolution opérée dans les institutions britanniques. Ils comportent une série de 4 programmes remarquables sur le Zoo de Londres (*The Ark*), une série sur l'Armée britannique en Irlande du Nord (*In the Company of Men*), ainsi que des sujets divers, tels que sur le Métro de Londres, la Maison des Lords, l'Angleterre rurale, et la star pop Geri Halliwell. Dineen filme elle-même tout en dialoguant avec ses sujets. Les conversations n'ont pas lieu dans un cadre imposé, mais la rencontre avec ses sujets s'opère au sein de leur univers de travail. Ainsi, elle nous donne à voir l'évolution et les conflits des institutions à travers le regard des participants. Il est étonnant de constater avec quelle facilité son discours, partiellement abrité derrière la caméra, exprime les sentiments et croyances de ses personnages. Dineen ne cache pas son implication avec le sujet qu'elle traite et, de la sorte, permet à son public de saisir comment un réalisateur interprète l'actualité qu'il filme.

El estilo muy personal de la documentarista británica Molly Dineen no impidió que sus obras hayan sido producidas por la televisión británica. Al contrario: su primer película, *Home from the Hill*, que evoca el retorno de un colono británico nativo de Kenia a Inglaterra, para terminar allí su vida, conoció un éxito considerable. Las películas siguientes abordan temas más generales, tales como los cambios sufridos por las instituciones británicas. Incluyen una serie ejemplar de 4 programas sobre el Zoológico de Londres (*The Ark*), una serie sobre el Ejército británico en Irlanda del Norte (*In the Company of Men*), así como programas sobre el Metro de Londres, la Casa de los Lords, la Inglaterra rural, y la estrella pop Geri Halliwell. Dineen filma con su cámara y dialoga con sus sujetos. Las conversaciones no están ambientadas en un medio impuesto, pero sí en el universo de trabajo de sus sujetos; de manera que vemos los cambios y conflictos de las instituciones a través de la mirada de los participantes, mediatizada por Dineen. Es sorprendente con qué facilidad su discurso, parcialmente oculto detrás de la cámara, expresa los sentimientos y creencias de sus personajes. Dineen tampoco disimula su compromiso con lo que filma; y, de tal manera, permite a su público entender cómo interpreta ella la actualidad que filma.

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# Archives at Work



Glauber Rocha during the shooting of *Barravento* (1961)





Vista general de la nueva sede de Filmoteca de Catalunya, Barcelona



La plaza de Salvador Seguí, en el barrio del Raval de Barcelona, desde la nueva sede de la Filmoteca de Catalunya

# Barcelona — Nueva sede de la Filmoteca de Catalunya

Esteve Riambau

Esteve Riambau: Director de la Filmoteca de Catalunya, Barcelona, y Vicepresidente de la FIAF

Desde principios de 2012, la Filmoteca de Catalunya dispone de una nueva sede que, en abril de 2013, acogerá la 69 edición del congreso de la FIAF. Este edificio de seis plantas (dos de ellas subterráneas) ha sido diseñado por el arquitecto Josep Lluís Mateo y está situado en el barrio del Raval, en pleno centro de Barcelona, rodeado de otras instituciones culturales públicas dedicadas a la música (Gran Teatre del Liceu), el arte contemporáneo (MACBA), el pensamiento (CCCB) o el libro (Biblioteca de Catalunya). Concebido como un equipamiento cultural consagrado a la cultura cinematográfica en sus diversas manifestaciones, el nuevo edificio de Filmoteca de Catalunya alberga, en sus 7.000 metros cuadrados, dos salas de proyección, espacios de exposición, biblioteca especializada y oficinas, además de una cafetería y una librería.

Las salas de cine, con una capacidad de 360 y 184 butacas respectivamente, llevan por nombre dos de las joyas más preciadas de nuestra colección fílmica: Segundo de Chomón, el cineasta de los orígenes que trabajó en Barcelona, París y Turín del cual disponemos de más de un centenar de películas; y Laya Films, la productora del gobierno autónomo catalán que, durante la guerra civil española, produjo más de un centenar de noticiarios de propaganda en contra del fascismo. La sala de exposiciones temporales, de casi 300 metros cuadrados, se ha inau-

gurado justamente con una muestra sobre las relaciones entre el cine y la guerra civil española. Otro espacio acoge, paralelamente, una exposición permanente de aparatos y objetos cinematográficos procedentes de la colección particular de Delmiro de Caralt, de cuyos fondos se nutre también un porcentaje importante de nuestra biblioteca especializada. Cuarenta mil libros, ochocientas cabeceras de revistas, más de cien mil fotografías o treinta mil carteles constituyen nuestro fondo documental. La integración en un único edificio de los diversos servicios que, hasta ahora dispersos, ya proporcionaba la Filmoteca de Catalunya permitirá optimizar los recursos y aumentar su capacidad de difusión sobre la base de un público ya existente (110.000 espectadores anuales) y la captación de nuevos usuarios.

Esta sede encontrará su imprescindible complemento en un nuevo Centro de Conservación ubicado en otro edificio de nueva planta, ya construido en Terrassa (a unos 40 km de Barcelona), que albergará desde finales de 2012 las más de ciento sesenta mil bobinas que integran nuestro archivo. La celebración en Barcelona del congreso de la FIAF, previsto para abril de 2013, será una excelente ocasión para mostrar a los miembros de la comunidad internacional las nuevas instalaciones de la Filmoteca de Catalunya, creada en 1982 y dependiente del gobierno autónomo catalán.



en

The Filmoteca de Catalunya will host the FIAF Congress in 2013 in two new premises. A new building of 7,000 square metres, inaugurated in 2012 in the city centre of Barcelona, offers facilities such as two screening rooms, exhibition galleries, a library, offices, a cafeteria, and a bookshop. A new Conservation Centre will be opened shortly, and will house some 160,000 reels held by the Filmoteca de Catalunya.

fr

La Filmoteca de Catalunya organisera le Congrès de la FIAF de 2013 dans de nouveaux locaux. Un bâtiment de 7000 m2, ouvert en 2012 en plein centre de Barcelone, dispose de deux salles de projection, de galeries d'exposition, d'une bibliothèque, de bureaux, d'une cafétéria et une librairie. Un nouveau centre de conservation sera inauguré prochainement et abritera les 160 000 bobines conservées par les archives de la Filmoteca de Catalunya.

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# Dublin — Irish Film & TV Research Online

Kevin Rockett

Kevin Rockett: Professor, Trinity College Dublin. Irish film historian and scholar; Chairman of the Irish Film Institute, 1984-1991

Irish Film & TV Research Online is a website conceived of and overseen by this writer, Kevin Rockett. Hosted by the School of Drama, Film and Music, Trinity College Dublin, it is designed to bring together the wide diversity of research material relating to Irish-made cinema and television, and Irish-themed audio-visual representations produced outside Ireland. It incorporates four searchable databases: the Irish Film & Television Index; a 1,200-item Irish Film & Television Bibliography; the Irish film censors' records, 1923-38; and Irish Film & Television Biographies (in development). In addition, it also includes for viewing and download nine restored Irish-themed films made during 1910-15.

The project began in the early 2000s with the massive Irish Film & Television Index, the impetus for which came from *The Irish Filmography: Fiction Films 1896-1996* (Dublin, 1996). Compiled and edited by this writer, *The Irish Filmography* drew on the archival and paper records of many of the world's leading film archives and specialist libraries, including ones in Ireland, Britain, America, and Australia, in order to document all fiction films from the beginnings of cinema made in Ireland and those produced worldwide about Ireland and the Irish. Funding from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences in 2003 allowed the original filmography not only to be updated but also to be expanded

to include all major non-fiction films (including newsreels), as well as animation, made for cinema and television, in Ireland, or about Ireland or the Irish worldwide. Other sponsors included Trinity College Dublin; Ireland's Higher Education Authority; and Bord Scannán na hÉireann/Irish Film Board. By the time the website went live in November 2006, almost 40,000 titles had been collated by research assistant Eugene Finn, who during 2003-06 combed a wide variety of sources, including databases of the Irish Film Archive, Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ), British and American broadcasters, and diverse written sources.

The website's value for researchers, whether academic, from within the film industry, or from the general public, is in its easy packaging of information concerning Irish-made or Irish-themed audio-visual material. In many cases, such information may have been gathered from numerous sources both within Ireland and elsewhere. Using the searchable fields, a researcher can almost instantly find a particular film, its cast list, or production personnel, read a synopsis of its content, establish where a copy of it might be held, what has been written about it, identify a list of complementary titles through a keyword search, or, using the biographical database, access further information on cast and crew, while the Irish censors' records database allows re-



*The Colleen Bawn* (1911)



*The Lad from Old Ireland* (1910)

searchers to find out the State's treatment of films submitted for release in Ireland in the period from the introduction of the Censorship of Films Act, 1923 to the late 1930s.

While the website has continued to grow since November 2006, the year 2011 saw its most dramatic development, when Irish Film & TV Research Online made available nine restored drama films about the Irish produced in Ireland and America by Sidney Olcott and others during 1910-15. Representing the first significant body of Irish/Irish-themed films to be made, many of these concern Irish history and are set during the 1798-1803 insurrectionary period, such as the rebel narratives *Rory O'More* (1911), *Brennan of the Moor* (1913), *For Ireland's Sake* (1914), *Ireland a Nation* (1914), and *Bold Emmet, Ireland's Martyr* (1915). The collection also includes the first explicitly Irish migration film, *The Lad from Old Ireland* (1910), which set the blueprint for other narratives in which the hero's traveling to America enables him to transcend his poverty; *The Colleen Bawn* (1911), an adaptation of Dion Boucicault's most famous play; an adaptation of another well-known work, Thomas Moore's poem, 'You Remember Ellen' (1912); and *His Mother* (1912), filmed in Ireland and the USA, which concerns a mother-son relationship. Despite their Irish subject matter, all of these were produced exclusively by American-based filmmakers. Indeed, it was only during 1916-20 that Irish filmmakers, mainly working for the first indigenous Irish film company, the Film Company of Ireland, began to make innovative and challenging films. (For a contextualized reading of one such film, the 1918 adap-

tation of Charles Kickham's historical novel *Knocknagow*, see the special Spring 2012 issue of the online journal *Screening the Past*.)

The restoration of the films was supervised by Professor Anil Kokaram of the School of Engineering, Trinity College Dublin, through his company Green Parrot Pictures. Prior to undertaking the work Kokaram, along with colleagues from the British company The Foundry – an innovator of visual effects and image processing technologies that boost productivity in motion picture and video post production – was awarded a Scientific and Technical Achievement Academy Award in 2006 for *The Furnace* – a software toolset that set a high standard of quality for optical flow-based image manipulation. Following the completion of the films' restoration, Green Parrot Pictures was bought by Google for use in developing its YouTube facility. Readers are invited to compare the quality of the nine restored films to seven of the same films, with more limited remastering, which were released as part of the 2-DVD set *The O'Kalem Collection: 1910-1915*, discussed elsewhere in this issue. The films for both projects were made available from the same sources, mostly the Irish Film Archive, though the archive did not play a direct role in either of the restoration processes.

**Irish Film & TV Research Online website:**  
<[www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>

Irish Film & TV Research Online (< [www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>) est un site internet très largement utilisé qui a été pensé et supervisé par l'historien de cinéma irlandais Kevin Rockett, professeur au Trinity College de Dublin. Il rassemble les nombreuses ressources documentaires liées au cinéma et à la télévision irlandais, ainsi que les documents audiovisuels sur le thème de l'Irlande mais produits en dehors de l'Irlande. Il intègre quatre bases de données consultables en ligne: Irish Film & Television Index; Irish Film & Television Bibliography (1200 sujets); Irish Film Censors' Records, 1923-38; et Irish Film & Television Biographies (en développement). En outre, il propose en consultation et téléchargement neuf films restaurés sur le thème de l'Irlande, réalisés entre 1910 et 1915.

Le projet a commencé au début des années 2000, avec le volumineux «Irish Film & Television Index», dont l'impulsion a été donnée par *The Irish Filmography: Fiction Films 1896-1996* (Dublin, 1996) du professeur Rockett, qui puisait dans les documents d'archives des plus grandes cinémathèques et bibliothèques spécialisées à travers le monde, notamment en Irlande, Grande-Bretagne, Amérique et Australie. Son but était de décrire la totalité des films de fiction depuis l'apparition du cinéma en Irlande, ainsi que ceux produits à travers le monde et traitant de l'Irlande et des Irlandais. Au moment de sa mise en ligne en novembre 2006, près de 40 000 titres avaient été rassemblés. De nouveaux éléments ont été ajoutés au site depuis lors, plus particulièrement les séries de films muets.

Irish Film & TV Research Online (<[www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>) es un sitio Web de mucho éxito, creado y supervisado por el historiador cinematográfico y profesor irlandés Kevin Rockett del Trinity College en Dublín. Fue concebido para juntar un amplio espectro de material de investigación relacionado con producciones de cine y televisión irlandesas, así como representaciones de temas sobre Irlanda en producciones audiovisuales producidos fuera del país. Comprende 4 bases de datos activas: un índice de películas de cine y televisión irlandesas (Irish Film & Television Index); una bibliografía de 1 200 elementos (Irish Film & Television Bibliography); las fichas de censura cinematográfica (Irish film censors' records, 1923-38); y las biografías de personalidades del cine irlandés (Irish Film & Television Biographies, en desarrollo). Adicionalmente, el sitio propone para su visionado y estudio 9 películas restauradas sobre temas irlandeses del período 1910-1915. El proyecto comenzó a principios del 2000 con el voluminoso Irish Film & Television Index, bajo el impulso del profesor Rockett y su *Irish Filmography: Fiction Films 1896-1996* (Dublín, 1996), quien enfocó su estudio sobre los elementos de archivos film y papel de numerosos bibliotecas y archivos especializados, incluyendo los de Irlanda, Bretaña, América, y Australia, con el objeto de documentar todas las películas de ficción desde los principios del cine en Irlanda, y las producciones realizadas a través del mundo sobre Irlanda y los irlandeses. A partir de su puesta en servicio en noviembre 2006, el sitio Web la base de datos contenía cerca de 40 000 títulos, incluyendo otros elementos del sitio Web, en particular las series de películas mudas.

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*The Lodger* (1926) at the Barbican concert hall, London



*The Ring* (1927)



# London — Restoring Hitchcock

Bryony Dixon & Kieron Webb

**Bryony Dixon:** Curator of silent film, BFI National Archive, London  
**Kieron Webb:** Film Conservation Manager, BFI National Archive, London

In this year of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics, Britain's cultural institutions, including the BFI, wheeled out their big guns for the London 2012 Festival. Shakespeare, Dickens, and Turner were obvious candidates, and who better to represent British film than its most celebrated genius, Alfred Hitchcock. The preservation and reassessment of his work is a top priority for the BFI, so this seemed a propitious moment to look again at his first nine surviving films. Of all of his films these were most in need of restoration and rediscovery, and the BFI National Archive was in a position to make a real difference both to the film materials and to their reputation.

His early work is still relatively unknown except among completists and is ripe for reassessment. It's surprising that although these films have always been available due to Hitchcock's prominence, none of the many prints and DVDs in circulation have benefited from full archival restoration. Some re-mastering or re-printing work has been done over the years by the BFI and the rights-owners. Only *The Lodger* (1926) was fully restored in the pre-digital era, but the new combination of photochemical and digital restoration techniques now make it possible for really significant improvements to be made in the surviving materials.

The BFI's restoration team consisting of curators and technical experts have undertaken detailed print source research with partner archives and rights-holders, and have worked with external digital laboratories, as well as doing much of the restoration work at its own facility, to produce restored 35mm prints (and DCPs) of the nine titles, three of them tinted, and new preservation masters.

There was a definite benefit to doing all nine titles at the same time – we learned a lot about Hitchcock's filmmaking style and predilections. We learned a lot too about contemporary studio practice, which was vital in the restoration process, as we only had the evidence of the film prints themselves to go on. No production paperwork survives for any of Hitchcock's silent films, and the British film censor records for the silent era were destroyed in the Blitz. British International Pictures, for example, made second or "export" negatives compiled from alternative shots (rather than filming with a second camera, a common practice in Hollywood). We can see this in two surviving prints of *The Ring* (1927) – the British release and the French version, which if you look very closely is made up almost entirely from different shots. In this instance, although we couldn't use the French version as a source it proved invaluable as a guide for checking

the sequencing and continuity of the British version. This practice also explained the feeling of “wrongness” about *Champagne* (1928), in which shots are clumsily juxtaposed and several shots exhibit sub-standard acting. For this title, unless another print turns up one day, we don’t have the finished film as Hitchcock produced it. Hitchcock paid scrupulous attention to details, so if something was wrong in filmmaking terms – even if he disliked the *subject* matter, as we know he did with *Champagne* – there was reason for us to question our source material. It was as we were pondering this that Claire West, who did the comparison work on all the different elements, discovered the words “2<sup>nd</sup> Neg” scratched into the leader of Reel One.

Gainsborough, the company which took over from Famous Players-Lasky at the Islington studio, and for whom Hitchcock made his first four films, seems to have been less-well-funded, and, as well as doing almost no marketing by comparison with better-heeled companies, preserved no negatives, so we were obliged to work from prints. An unexpected compensation, however, has been that for *The Pleasure Garden* (1925), *The Lodger* (1926), and *Downhill* (1927) we have evidence of the original tinting scheme, which we have been able to restore.

The most exciting outcomes of the restoration process have been to the first and last of Hitchcock’s silents – the astonishing quality which was possible with a combination of wet- and dry-scanning from the original negative of *Blackmail* (1929), and the reinstatement of footage to *The Pleasure Garden* (1925). Working with five different elements, we were able to reposition small details which make the film flow better and add to our knowledge of Hitchcock’s style. There was no debate about where the pieces of this puzzle would fit – the scripting is so logical that they wouldn’t fit anywhere else. A good case in point was a seemingly random close-up of a cup of tea, found in one print but not the others. Close observation reveals that floating in the cup is a tea leaf – which according to an English “old wives’ tale” foretells the arrival of a stranger, for good or evil. It fits into a scheme Hitchcock has created of omens which warn Patsy against involvement with the character of Levet. The shot fits exactly with a

reaction shot from Patsy as she points out the tea leaf to Hugh, and the arrival of Levet, the stranger, right on cue.

Of course presentation is the key to getting to the hearts of the audience. At the time of writing, four gala screenings have taken place, to great acclaim: *The Pleasure Garden* (1925), at Wilton’s, a little gem of a Victorian London music hall, with a score by 24-year-old musical prodigy Daniel Patrick Cohen, and the orchestra bathed in coloured lights that changed in time with the film’s tints; *Blackmail* (1929), with Neil Brand’s powerful score, at the British Museum, where the dénouement of the film takes place; *The Ring* (1927), at the Hackney Empire, a theatre Hitchcock would certainly have known, with a vibrant new jazz score by Soweto Kinch; and *The Lodger* (1926), with Nitin Sawhney’s full orchestral score, triumphed at the Barbican concert hall.

#### THE RESTORATIONS

Restoration work on Hitchcock’s nine surviving silent films as director will have taken over three years to complete when it finishes later this year. The team has striven throughout the project to make the restored films the products of thorough print research, intensive comparison and selection of source materials, rigorous and innovative scanning, and, finally, sensitive reproduction of the films’ original textures in 35mm print and DCP.

The BFI National Archive restored the films in close collaboration with Deluxe 142 in London, and as a result the work was spread across multiple locations. Additionally, the commission of new scores for seven of the films meant their reconstruction was carried out in collaboration with the composers. The project’s focus, however, has been the individual design of restoration for historically significant films.

#### INTERNATIONAL SEARCH

Starting in 2009, we undertook a search for all existing film elements. It is testament to the continuing respect in which Hitchcock’s work is held that we were actively approached by several archives and collections with details of



Tea leaf close-up insert shot from *The Pleasure Garden* (1925)

their holdings. Overall, as might have been expected, the search revealed that the majority of the extant copies were within the BFI National Archive collections and many of those in other archives were access prints derived from them. Fortunately, however, among the important discoveries were four nitrate prints and six other elements that have become sources in the restorations or benefited the project greatly.

Thanks to the generosity and enthusiasm of our FIAF colleagues and lending institutions from three continents, these copies were assembled at the BFI National Archive's Conservation Centre, where detailed inspection and comparison work was completed. This print research, always the crucial foundation of restoration, has informed and enabled the subsequent technical work in identifying both source materials and original copies useful for reference. Any restoration project is first and foremost a report back on the nature of a film's existence. In the case of Hitchcock's silent films, the report has been both sobering in its picture of films ultimately existing in either singular or fragile copies and also exhilarating in the opportunity it presented for restoring and presenting the films properly.

#### ANALYSIS OF ELEMENTS

A thorough analysis of the physical characteristics, technical provenance, and photographic quality of the available film elements then followed. The conclusions of this analysis determined the most appropriate restoration route for the source materials, as well as their authentic editorial reconstruction. It was at this stage that plans for the scanning of the original elements were tailored accordingly. Scanning and reconstruction are critically intertwined aspects: choices affecting the latter will be informed by the results of the former, just as scanning methods will be adjusted to the demands of reconstruction.

The materials that exist for each of Hitchcock's silents can be broadly categorized into three groups:

1. those films for which original negatives exist (*The Manxman*, *Blackmail*, and *Champagne*);
2. those that exist only as vintage nitrate prints (*The Pleasure Garden*, *Downhill*, and *The Lodger*);

3. and the films which no longer survive in the form they were released (*The Ring*, *The Farmer's Wife*, and *Easy Virtue*).

Let's start with the first group, those films for which original negatives exist: *The Manxman*, *Blackmail*, and *Champagne*. Although the existence of the original camera negative ensures the best image quality in the restoration, our understanding of its "nature" and correct reproduction is always enhanced by the corresponding evaluation of contemporary release prints. These can indicate the original edit, length of intertitles, and grading. We are fortunate that this is the case for *The Manxman* (1929), but it is almost the sole example within the project. The nitrate print confirmed the black and white release of the film, as indicated by the instruction "B/W" which was scratched on the negative's leaders, and provided additional frames for a shot that had been abbreviated in the negative by damage.

Famously, *Blackmail* was released as Britain's first part-talking feature, and two negatives were assembled: one for the silent version and one for the sound. Although the silent negative was in a parlous state dimensionally, described below in the section about scanning, it was incredibly complete. Indeed, it is a fascinating locus of how optical effects were being produced at this time. Examining the negative demonstrates that the optical effects, the fades and dissolves which are so important in the B.I.P. films, were produced in three ways: in the camera; as "(over)lap" dissolves; and in the lab as dupe negatives which were then cut into the original negative. The latter method is, of course, how opticals were made in the subsequent decades of sound production. However, the sophisticated optical printers and duplicating stocks designed for the purpose were not available in the 1920s, and it is interesting to see that producers wanted to include opticals even at the expense of image quality.

"Lap" dissolves were made up of the two shots to be mixed. Fades were created at the end of the outgoing shot and the start of the incoming shot. These were bi-packed in the printer, in contact with the print stock, and the effect was therefore generated for each print

directly from the camera negative. Over time, as the negatives were repeatedly handled and acquired into archive collections, the overlapping shots were disassembled and joined end-to-end. When printed, the sequence appears as a fade-out and fade-in rather than a mix, and this is the way many have been seen in archive access prints. Inspection of the negatives at these points, judged in their narrative context, can lead to a reasonable decision to overlap the scans and make the dissolve. The effect will look quite authentic, even as part of a digital process, because the unevenness of the fades is incorporated in the negatives. Again, this decision is easier if contemporary prints are available because the opticals will be incorporated in them.

In the second group of Hitchcock's silents are the films that exist as nitrate prints: *The Pleasure Garden*, *Downhill*, and *The Lodger*. *The Lodger*, hitherto perhaps the best-known of Hitchcock's silent films, survives as an assortment of nitrate print reels. Comparison with Ivor Montagu's typewritten list of intertitles (one of the few pieces of documentary evidence relating to Hitchcock's silents, apart from press books) revealed that the film's continuity is nevertheless embodied almost fully.

*The Pleasure Garden* is *sui generis* among the restorations, not least because it is Hitchcock's first film as director. It is also the film which has been unequivocally transformed by reconstruction and restoration. For a long period, the film had circulated in what were apparently two versions. The first was the BFI's viewing print, derived from the sole nitrate print in the collection. The other was a print from the Raymond Rohauer collection. Such were the differences between the two that it was possible to believe the film had been released originally in two versions. The restoration team's patience in pursuing the international search was rewarded with the discovery of four nitrate prints – one from the BFI, one from EYE Film Institute Netherlands (who also loaned a nitrate print of *Downhill*), one from the Cinémathèque française, and one from Southern Methodist University in Dallas (which is preserved at George Eastman House). The fifth copy was an acetate low-contrast positive, the master for the Rohauer printing negative, and was kindly lent by Douris UK Ltd.

Once the prints could be examined together, it became clear that there had only been one negative. The Dutch nitrate print acted as a “key” because, although certainly incomplete, it overlapped intricately with the footage of the other copies. It was therefore possible not only to see how the film could be reconstructed overall, but also how small insertions could be made at the local level. In one shot, Miles Mander throws his hat onto a table; the flight of the hat is comprised of frames from the Dutch and Rohauer prints. This one example is synecdochically indicative of the vast improvement made to the narrative’s sense.

Lastly, there are the films which do not exist in the form in which they were released: *The Ring*, *The Farmer’s Wife*, and *Easy Virtue*. Hitchcock’s last film for Gainsborough, *Easy Virtue* (1927), is the only one of the nine which can currently be confirmed as existing only in 16mm reduction prints. Five of these are being compared for quality and completeness prior to restoration of the best sources. Acetate duplicating positives of *The Ring* and *The Farmer’s Wife*, made in the 1960s from original negatives, are the earliest-generation sources.

#### APPROACH FOR INTERTITLES

Considered as examples of the sophisticated narrative productions of the 1920s, Hitchcock’s silent films are particularly interesting for their employment of intertitles. Again, there appears a difference between the two production companies, Gainsborough and British International Pictures. The literary, at times florid, style of Gainsborough is correspondingly illustrated by “art” cards. These gave way to the sparse and more elegant style of B.I.P., used almost solely as dialogue, and illustrated simply by white text on a black background.

Given the importance of intertitles in the films, we decided to afford them due attention in the restoration work. *Blackmail* was the only film for which we could use the original titles intact, because they existed in the negative in the correct length and could be repaired digitally as “sequences”, similar to the picture. Intertitles for the other films were restored extremely carefully, using a mix of lab

and digital techniques. Careful reconstruction of each card in Photoshop was followed by film-recording of individual frames. These were stretch-printed on negative and printed again to introduce grain, movement, and fluctuation. These new film elements were then scanned and edited into the digital master.

#### ASPECTS OF THE RESTORATION PROCESS SCANNING AND COLOUR

The BFI National Archive acquired an ARRISCAN film scanner last year, with funds from the government’s Screen Heritage UK project. The Hitchcock project marked the initial use of the scanner, equipped with a wet-gate. The nitrate copies for Hitchcock’s first and last silent films – *The Pleasure Garden* and *Blackmail* – were scanned at the Conservation Centre. The nitrate prints of *The Pleasure Garden* were scanned exclusively with the wet-gate. However, just as in printing, wet-gate scanning entails a slight but perceptible loss in definition, and we were extremely keen to avoid this in the case of the *Blackmail* camera negative. The negative was scanned dry, at 4K resolution, and the scans were reviewed in Deluxe’s theatre to identify those scenes which would benefit from wet-gate scanning because of scratching. As anticipated, these occurred at the head and tail of reels, where handling has been most intrusive.

The challenges of managing the ARRISCAN’s wet-gate with original materials has been very usefully described by Fumiko Tsuneishi.<sup>1</sup> Our experience mirrors that, and, similarly, we have been very happy with the results of scanning. The reproduction of the photographic tones in *Blackmail*’s negative is astonishing, but the curl of the film stock, dangerously combined with its incredibly precise but narrow splices, demanded intensive handling. By contrast, good results have been achieved from the nitrate prints of *The Pleasure Garden* using the scanner’s “double-flash” system, which outputs a scan combined from two differing exposures of the film.

1. Fumiko Tsuneishi, “From a Wooden Box to Digital Film Restoration”, *Journal of Film Preservation* 85, October 2011, pp. 63-72.



Reproduction of the tones and tints found in three films, *The Pleasure Garden*, *Downhill*, and *The Lodger*, has also constituted a major aspect of our restoration project. In the absence of scripts or other primary documentation, it appears that these are the only Hitchcock films which were released domestically in tinted and toned prints. Perhaps it is fortunate therefore that they survive only as prints, because the prints themselves are the witnesses, often contradictory, to the films' tinting and toning schemes. Examination has been aimed at determining the colour schemes of British release prints, and these have been followed in the restorations.

Following earlier work on Ponting's *The Great White Silence* (1924) and Mander's *The First Born* (1928), we aimed to reproduce the colours in the digital intermediate grade. This allows, of course, for practically limitless control over colour and contrast, as well as the opportunity to independently alter regions of the frame and parts of the image's tonal range. These latter possibilities were particularly advantageous in the reproduction of the tinting and toning scheme of *The Lodger*, which combines blue toning and amber tinting in many night-time exterior sequences to mimic the foggy atmosphere of the narrative. Having graded the colours, we are very happy with their subsequent duplication in a variety of preservation and presentation formats: 35mm colour negative and prints; DCP; and HD video master.

Every ten years since 1952, the BFI's magazine *Sight & Sound* has conducted a worldwide poll to find the "greatest film of all time" as voted for by critics and historians (and indeed several FIAF archivists). It is timely that we were able to bring audiences all nine of his surviving silent films just as Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, after many years of climbing up the list, finally toppled *Citizen Kane* from the No. 1 spot. With any great artist, early works are always revealing, and we hope that peeling back the years of damage to these films will encourage all of us to look again at the work of a master.

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Les Jeux olympiques de Londres en 2012 furent le cadre d'une série d'événements culturels exceptionnels. La National Archive du British Film Institute a choisi de célébrer cette occasion avec le projet le plus ambitieux qu'il n'ait jamais mis en avant : la restauration des neuf films muets d'Alfred Hitchcock qui ont survécu. Le défi était de taille, de la recherche de fonds à la rareté des matériaux d'origine. Les résultats sont cependant plus que satisfaisants et vont permettre à plusieurs générations d'étudier les premiers travaux d'un réalisateur dont la renommée n'en finit pas de grandir. Le travail de restauration a été l'occasion de plusieurs nouvelles découvertes pour les chercheurs qui travaillent sur Hitchcock. L'absence de scripts, de dossiers de studio, même d'évaluations de censure, a imposé à l'équipe du BFI de pratiquer une véritable expertise sur l'art de faire un film chez Hitchcock de manière à s'assurer du bien fondé des diverses décisions qu'il fallait prendre et des interventions pratiquées. En cours de route, les chercheurs ont appris à mieux connaître l'homme et l'activité des studios britanniques dans les années 20, ainsi qu'à se familiariser avec l'histoire complexe des matériaux d'archives. Bien qu'il ne s'agisse pas de la première restauration numérique entreprise par le BFI, les techniques mises au point pour le projet « Hitchcock muet » ont assurément aidé à améliorer de façon notable le travail final et du coup à assurer la conservation à long terme de l'héritage de ce génie du cinéma.

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Los Juegos Olímpicos de Londres de 2012 inspiraron una serie de eventos culturales fecundos en Gran Bretaña. El Archivo Nacional del BFI decidió celebrar el acontecimiento con un proyecto ambicioso: la restauración de las nueve películas mudas de Alfred Hitchcock que perduran hoy día. El reto fue considerable – desde la obtención de Fuentes de financiación hasta el manejo de la escasez de material original –, pero los resultados fueron altamente satisfactorios y permitirán a los jóvenes de hoy y a las generaciones futuras disfrutar y estudiar las primeras obras de un director cuyo prestigio sigue creciendo. El proceso de restauración condujo a varios descubrimientos que constituyen una primicia para los estudiosos de Hitchcock. La ausencia de guiones, fichas de los estudios, o incluso de apreciaciones de la censura, obligó al equipo del BFI a sumergirse de lleno en el proceso mismo de dirección cinematográfica de Hitchcock para asegurarse de que sus decisiones e intervenciones eran las que él deseaba. Recorriendo este camino, aprendimos más sobre el hombre mismo, sobre la práctica de los estudios británicos de los años 1920s, y sobre la compleja historia del material-fuente de los archivos. Esta no es desde luego la primera restauración digital del BFI, pero las técnicas desarrolladas durante el proyecto "Silent Hitchcock" contribuyeron de manera significativa a mejorar el resultado de los trabajos de restauración y a asegurar la salvaguarda a largo plazo del legado de este genio de la cinematografía.

# México D.F. — The Importance of Co-operation between Archives in the Digital Age: The Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica and Filmarchiv Austria

**Beatríz Torres Insúa & Silvester Stöger**

**Beatríz Torres Insúa:** Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica, México D.F.  
**Silvester Stöger:** Filmarchiv Austria, Wien

Today, film archives are not only facing a future of transition to the digital realm in preservation, archiving, and providing more open access to their collections – they are actually seeing it happen all around them, right now. Major production companies have ceased to manufacture analog technical equipment like film cameras; some cinemas are closing, and the surviving ones are rapidly switching to digital projection. As it becomes increasingly difficult to find film laboratories and knowledgeable staff, the distribution of 35mm print diminishes, the future of film stock production in general is called into question, and the majority of contemporary film productions have already turned digital. While the debate can be heard that to save film collections means to digitize them, and while digital film restoration is making big strides as it becomes a common practice, some major challenges are appearing for film archives. The “digital revolution” has not stopped in front of the doors of our institutions. Currently, some usages

are handled very well, as they have been for a relatively long time; however, many other concepts and tools are still being introduced in the film archive field.

One important characteristic of digital technology is the speed at which it is changing and becoming obsolete, and how fast we need to accommodate our personal dealings to keep pace with these developments. Our institutions need the knowledge to enable them to make the right decisions when undertaking constantly bigger investments. Of course, technology has always been constantly changing, but the pace at which we are seeing the transformation taking place in digital media today is quite astonishing. The new technology is fundamentally different from the characteristics of the technological artefacts film archives are used to working with, especially when it comes to the introduction of digital assets as the objects to be preserved. Of course, the pacesetter of those changes has always been the industry’s drive to

build new markets – for example, by changing standards in order to sell new products. Keeping up with the tempo of the industry is very hard for institutions, with their often uncertain budget situation, especially when considering the amount of money required to keep digital facilities running, maintained, and renewed.

Under these circumstances, co-operation between institutions could be very supportive in finding ways to deal with the current requirements of film archive activities, extending from the simple exchange of experiences and giving each other training in certain applications, to even building alliances for managing more intense investments.

### THE EXCHANGE

Last autumn the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC) in Mexico City published an article in the *Journal of Film Preservation*<sup>1</sup> explaining the challenges of safeguarding its film productions, which discussed some of the issues inherent in this undertaking. The CCC's interest in film preservation has started to go beyond fundamental actions like climate-controlled storage, cataloguing, and film inspection. We are now confronting our duties to involve students, conservators, archivists, academics, and general audiences in activities such as vault tours, talks with specialists, film inspection, and film handling courses.

As the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica is planning to include digital restoration procedures in its activities in the near future, the expertise of someone familiar with the issues was particularly welcome. One early initiative was to invite Silvester Stöger of Filmarchiv Austria to Mexico City to deliver a lecture in August 2011 at the CCC, made possible with the kind support of Lisa Johnson, Chief of the CCC's library and film archive. Entitled "Giving a (digital) future to Austrian Film", it focused mainly on the restoration procedures and the different activities of Filmarchiv Austria.

Part of the audience consisted of young filmmakers. The CCC is trying to get students more interested in the preservation field, because sooner or later they will have to face the digital dilemma in archiving and preserving their works. The participation of film archivists from different institutions in Mexico, such as the Cineteca Nacional, Filmoteca de la Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM), Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía (IMCINE), Filmoteca Michoacana, and other people in charge of film and photographic archives, was even more noteworthy. An extended Q&A session at the end of the lecture attested to the need for information on the topic in our country and reconfirmed the issue of the complexity of digital restoration calling for a continuous learning process, as well as the necessity of overcoming perpetual new challenges to improve our work. All the participants were delighted to be part of this opportunity to create an exchange between the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica and Filmarchiv Austria.

In the future it is doubtful that archives will be able to afford expensive training courses for all of their staff. Therefore, it would be helpful to continue the promotion of a more active communication between our institutions – for example, organizing small hands-on courses, visits to each others' facilities, and talks about troubleshooting in everyday work, so we can create a pool of useful information accessible to all workers in the film conservation field. More active co-operation, if politically possible, would enable institutions to better deal with the pressures resulting from today's rapid technological changes. At the end of the day, all institutions working in film preservation share the same goal: to keep films alive. Instead of struggling all alone, it would be much easier to join forces and work together.

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1. Lisa Johnson Mújica, Beatriz Torres Insúa, Caroline Figueroa Fuentes, "The Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC)", *Journal of Film Preservation* 85, 10/2011, pp. 60-62.



Beatriz Torres, Silvester Stöger and Lisa Johnson at the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica

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Le Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC) à Mexico a adhéré à la FIAF en 2010. Comme il est avant tout une école de cinéma, il a dû redéfinir certaines de ses activités, dans le but d'intégrer les questions liées à l'archivage des films au programme pédagogique et d'initier des projets de coopération avec d'autres institutions. En août 2011, le CCC a invité le restaurateur de film Silvester Stöger de Filmarchiv Austria à donner une conférence sur les expériences pratiques de restauration numérique de films. Cette visite a permis de souligner l'importance des échanges d'expériences pratiques entre institutions. Cela est particulièrement important à une époque où les archives de films intègrent de plus en plus les technologies numériques et où il est de plus en plus difficile de suivre le rythme imposé par l'industrie dans ce domaine.

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En 2010, el Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC) en México D.F. adhirió a la FIAF. Siendo primordialmente una escuela de cine consciente de la importancia de la historia del cine y sus técnicas, el CCC incluyó recientemente programas en su currícula dirigidos a sus estudiantes, con el objeto de desarrollar las actividades de archivo cinematográficos y la cooperación con otras instituciones del género. En agosto 2011, el CCC invitó al experto en restauración Silvester Stöger del Filmarchiv Austria a impartir un curso basado en sus experiencias prácticas de la restauración digital de películas.

Durante esta visita, se estableció la importancia del intercambio de conocimiento práctico entre instituciones, particularmente en estos tiempos en que la utilización de las tecnologías digitales se están forjando su camino en los archivos cinematográficos y que resulta difícil mantener el ritmo impuesto por la industria.







# São Paulo — The Glauber Rocha Archive and the Cinematca Brasileira

Gabriela Sousa de Queiroz

Gabriela Sousa de Queiroz: Coordinates the Personal and Institutional Archives at the Center for Cinema Documentation and Research, Cinematca Brasileira, São Paulo

The importance of Glauber Rocha (1939-1981) for Brazilian and world culture extends beyond the field of cinema. His personal and professional trajectory was marked by an urge to intervene in Brazilian society, using cinema as a privileged instrument of representation via a revolutionary aesthetic, and was imbued with conflicting tensions. He earned international recognition for his work, and his allegories have been extrapolated far beyond their Brazilian context. Although he is one of the directors that film historians have analyzed at length, research on him and his far-ranging work is far from being exhausted; happily, the Glauber Rocha Archive now exists, offering rich potential for the study and understanding of the man and his work.

The Glauber Rocha Archive was built up in a rather peculiar way. It began with Glauber Rocha's own aim of safekeeping his legacy for history, and ended with the direct intervention of the Brazilian government to acquire the collection and transfer it to the nation's public film archive, the Cinematca Brasileira. In this process, it is important to mention the enormous work done by Tempo Glauber (literally, "Glauber's Time"), an entity founded by the filmmaker's mother Lúcia Rocha, which en-

sured the collection's survival by keeping her son's memory alive, until the transfer of the collection to the Cinematca's archive.

Glauber Pedro de Andrade Rocha was born in Vitória da Conquista in the state of Bahia on 14 March 1939. While still a teenager, Glauber wrote film reviews for local newspapers and was steeped in the influence of the critic Walter da Silveira, also from Bahia, who founded a film club in Salvador in 1950 that became an important focal point for film studies. Glauber enrolled at the state university's law school in 1957, but soon dropped out. His first film was an experimental short titled *Pátio* (1957-1959). In 1961 he directed the full-length *Barravento*, which met with a very favorable reception at the 1962 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. The following year, his book *Revisão crítica do cinema brasileiro* (Critical Review of Brazilian Cinema) provided a historical perspective on the development of film in Brazil, and made him the leading intellectual for a generation of filmmakers creating a new cinematic language capable of representing Brazil's social reality.

At the age of 25, with *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol* (*Black God, White Devil*, 1964), Rocha became recognized as the leading

voice of Cinema Novo, the most widely known Brazilian film movement. This position was reinforced by his 1965 manifesto *A estética da fome (Aesthetics of Hunger)*, launched in Genoa. In 1966 he made two documentaries, *Amazonas, Amazonas* and *Maranhão 66*, followed by the award-winning *Terra em transe (Land in Anguish/Entranced Earth, 1967)*, a milestone in Brazil's political cinema.

From 1968 through 1972 he directed *Câncer*. In 1969 *O dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro (Antonio das Mortes)* won the Best Director award at the Cannes International Film Festival. His subsequent works, *Der leone have sept cabeças (The Lion Has Seven Heads, 1970)*, filmed in the former French colony of Congo-Brazzaville, and *Cabezas cortadas (Cutting Heads, 1970)*, shot in Spain, universalized his aesthetic of violence. In 1971, as political repression in Brazil was stepped up, Rocha left for a five-year period of exile in New York, during which he visited various countries, directing *História do Brasil (History of Brazil, 1974)* in Cuba and *Claro (1975)* in Italy.

After his return to Brazil in 1976, Glauber Rocha was embroiled in controversies with sectors of the Left in relation to the military regime. With funding from the state film agency Embrafilme, he made *A idade da Terra (The Age of the Earth, 1980)*, a project that broke free from all aesthetic tradition. In 1979 he conducted a series of provocative interviews with artists, politicians, and ordinary individuals for a weekly television programme called *Abertura* (literally meaning "opening", in the sense of an easing of control, or an opportunity) aired by TV Tupi (a Brazilian broadcasting station that no longer exists). He also wrote the novel *Riverão Sussuarana (1977)* and a collection of essays entitled *Revolução do Cinema Novo (The Revolution of Cinema Novo, 1981)*.

In 1980 Glauber Rocha asked Carlos Augusto Machado Calil, then the head of Embrafilme's Non-Commercial Operations Department, to act as curator for his film *œuvre*. His films and documents were scattered all over the world, kept by friends and relatives, and Glauber realized the urgent need to try to bring them together. At this point, Calil suggested that the most suitable place would be the Fundação

Cinematca Brasileira (Brazilian Film Library Foundation), which at that time was a private entity officially designated as being "of public interest". Glauber was a friend of Paulo Emilio Salles Gomes, and had followed his struggle to ensure that Brazil had an archive to conserve and disseminate film culture, despite financial and structural obstacles. By 1976 he and Paulo Emilio were discussing the possibility of transferring his films to the Cinematca Brasileira, along with non-commercial screening rights.

From Europe, Glauber Rocha sent letters recommending the best procedures for storing and disseminating his archive through publications and screening programmes. The Cinematca Brasileira was given audiovisual items that were sent back to Brazil and a set of 2,000 documents, which are now part of the Glauber Rocha Archive.<sup>1</sup>

On Glauber's death in August 1981, Embrafilme produced the first complete retrospective of his work, "Glauber por Glauber" ("Glauber by Glauber"), for which it located the negatives and masters of such important films as *Cabezas cortadas*, *O dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro*, and *Terra em transe*. In the process of preparing the retrospective, it emerged that the negatives of the latter two films had been destroyed by fire in France many years previously. In 1983 Embrafilme published *O século do cinema (The Century of Cinema)*, an anthology of Glauber's film reviews from 1957 through 1981.

The effort to conserve Glauber's life-work took a new turn in 1983 with the founding of Tempo Glauber. Its collection comprised documents Glauber had given his mother in 1980, before leaving for the Venice Film Festival, and others added later. The organization was sustained by private and public donations and support by friends. In 1987, on acquiring its own premises, it started to take more initiatives as a cultural entity, promoting film culture more extensively. In 2003, with the assistance of the Cinematca Brasileira, Tempo Glauber started working on a comprehensive film restoration

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1. Which was organized and opened up in 2004, thanks to funding from a programme supporting Ibero-American archives run by Spain's Ministry of Culture.



Glauber Rocha directs Geraldo Del Rey during the filming of *Black God, White Devil* (1964)

project, beginning with *Barravento*, *Terra em transe*, *O dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro*, and *A idade da Terra*. From 2009 through 2011, the Cinemateca also helped to restore *Der Leone have sept cabeças* and *Pátio*.

In late 2010, as part of a programme to fund archival collections, the Audiovisual Secretariat of Brazil's Ministry of Culture acquired the rights to Glauber Rocha's work for non-commercial purposes, together with documentation materials comprising his intellectual output, and photographs totaling some 6,000 items.<sup>2</sup> This collection was transferred to the Cinemateca Brasileira in August 2011. Unlike the situation back in 1980, when Glauber had first transferred part of his per-

sonal documentation, the Cinemateca was now a public body attached to the federal government, and the acquisition of this collection, with the consent of his family and the state government, reinforced its role as the principal Brazilian institution for audiovisual preservation, equipped with the resources and capabilities required for the conservation and dissemination of collections of this exceptional calibre.

The paper documentation covers all of Glauber's extraordinary intellectual output, some letters, and a collection of press items. Photographs show moments of happiness and relaxation with family and friends, shots of him on sets handling cameras or directing actors, scenes from his films, and appearances and talks at film events. The range of material reflects Glauber's intensive and extensive research

2. Glauber's personal library, drawings, awards, and trophies, as well as his correspondence, remained in the custody of his family, at Tempo Glauber.



Luis Buñuel and Glauber Rocha in Venice, 1967

and creative work, and has been catalogued and arranged based on his filmography and other projects.

Film scripts and notes show the different forms and stages of preparation of Glauber's creative process and the complexity behind his unique style. In the case of scripts that were eventually filmed, there is a record of their genesis, with deletions and rejections reflecting choices culminating in the films as screened. Glauber's drawings and sketches for takes and sequences reinforce and complement his written stories and anticipate his moving images. There are more than five versions of the script for *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol*, the first of which he wrote at the age of 20. The collection also contains a number of projects that were not filmed for various reasons, such as the shortage of funds and the director's fast-lane lifestyle.

The literary aspect of Glauber's career is represented by several short stories, poems, outlines for novels, plays, and essays covering politics, philosophy, and history – all indicative of his extensive cultural background and wealth of ideas. These qualities are also seen in his numerous film reviews, in which he

examines the relationships between film and other art forms such as literature and theatre, and analyses the major Brazilian and foreign films and their political and aesthetic aspects. Outstanding items include written and typed manuscripts for *O século do cinema* (The Century of Cinema), which show him reaching theoretical maturity as a filmmaker-intellectual, as well as his highly original contribution to the discussion of cinema.

A significant collection of press items – compiled by Glauber himself – shows his concern for the repercussions of his always-controversial work in Brazil and internationally. This concern for his image is most evident in his autobiographical texts. Glauber Rocha's progression cannot be separated from the broader context of dialogue with other historical subjects, contemporary or not. In April 1971, in New York, he started writing *Udigrudi* (*Diário do exílio*) (literally, "Underground (Diary of Exile)", *udigrudi* being a garbled form of "underground"), an example of a landmark document found in his personal archive. Its over 300 pages tell of a life charged with all kinds of tensions and restlessness. Reality and fiction are fused in several passages, and meaning is constructed from conflicts and

negotiations between the writer-subject and his peers. There is an awareness of his place in history and his own mortality, and his efforts to determine preparations and representatives for his own legacy. In 1972, at the end of the diary, Glauber states that in the event of his death the book should be given to the Brazilian diplomat Armando Carrilho, to be published along with his other writings as part of an ongoing project involving the Cinemateca.

The arrangement of the Glauber Rocha Archive aims to understand and revisit all the complexity that characterizes his life and work. Applying standards to the collection is just one side of the coin. Reconstructing the meanings and the chains of reasoning of these written documents also requires critiquing and comparing them with properly preserved audiovisual materials, as well as other collections held by the Cinemateca's Center for Cinema Documentation and Research.

This 30-year effort to preserve the memory of Brazil's greatest filmmaker has involved a concerted conjunction of social forces and individual efforts to gather and preserve the films and documents that Glauber produced.

One of its main features is the relationship and collaborative work between Glauber Rocha's heirs and the Cinemateca Brasileira film library, and the particular social roles assumed by each of them.

The acquisition of rights and collections by public or private film archives should be a subject of much more concern in the debate around cinema. It raises questions that may enrich our understanding of public policies for culture, and may shed light on the conflicts and contradictions involved in the preservation and construction of a collective cinema memory through institutionalized initiatives. The Cinemateca Brasileira is eager to continue and expand its work on this front, with the aim of constructing a permanent edifice of living memory, while strengthening the confidence of directors and heirs who entrust their collections to our institution not only for the benefit of cinema culture, but all culture.

The author wishes to thank her colleagues at the Cinemateca Brasileira's Center for Cinema Documentation and Research for their support and contributions in the preparation of this article.

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Cet article se penche sur le processus unique de compilation des archives de Glauber Rocha à la Cinemateca Brasileira, qui s'est déroulé en trois étapes. La première avait commencé avec le réalisateur lui-même, lorsqu'il prit conscience de l'importance de préparer la sauvegarde de son œuvre pour la postérité. À cette fin, il a initié durant les dernières années de sa vie un projet de conservation et de dissémination de son travail. La Cinemateca Brasileira fut impliquée à différents niveaux dans le développement de ce projet, initialement en conservant des bobines de films et une partie de la collection de documents que le réalisateur avait confiés à l'institution. Avec la mort prématurée du cinéaste en 1981, ce projet a pris une nouvelle tournure, résultant de la conjonction de forces sociales, d'initiatives institutionnelles et d'efforts individuels. La deuxième étape démarra en 1983, quand l'entité «Tempo Glauber» («L'ère Glauber») fut fondée pour conserver et disséminer sa mémoire, en lien avec des recherches alors menées à la Cinemateca. L'acquisition par l'État des droits sur les œuvres du cinéaste et sur certains documents, ainsi que le transfert de ceux-ci à la Cinemateca Brasileira en 2011, a marqué la troisième étape de la trajectoire de cette archive personnelle. Celle-ci comprend un important fonds documentaire sur la vie et l'œuvre de l'un des artistes les plus créatifs du cinéma.

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El artículo aborda el proceso singular de la creación en tres etapas del Archivo Glauber Rocha en la Cinemateca Brasileira.

La primera etapa comenzó cuando el mismo Glauber Rocha tomó conciencia de que había que prever la salvaguarda de su obra para la posteridad. En los últimos años de su vida, estaba preparando un proyecto de preservación y exhibición de su obra. La Cinemateca Brasileira estuvo implicada de varias maneras en el desarrollo de este proyecto, conservando inicialmente elementos fílmicos y parte de la colección de documentos que el artista confió a la institución. Luego del fallecimiento prematuro de Glauber Rocha en 1981, el proyecto tomó un nuevo rumbo, resultante de la conjunción de nuevas fuerzas sociales, iniciativas institucionales y esfuerzos individuales.

La segunda etapa comenzó en 1983 con la creación de Tempo Glauber (que se podría traducir como "Tiempos Glauber"), organismo que tenía por objetivo la preservación y exhibición de la memoria de Glauber conservada en la Cinemateca Brasileira.

La adquisición por el Estado de los derechos de la obra del cineasta y de una parte de la documentación, y su traspaso a la Cinemateca Brasileira en 2011, marcan la tercera etapa en la evolución de este archivo personal y de los fondos documentales relacionados con la vida y obra extraordinarias de uno de los artistas cinematográficos más creativos de su generación.





*Die freudlose Gasse, 1925, G.W. Pabst*

# Books & DVDs



*Die freudlose Gasse*, 1925, G.W. Pabst; Werner Krauss as the butcher, leering up at a woman's legs

# *The British Film Institute, the government and film culture, 1933-2000*

**Roger Smither**

Former Keeper of the Imperial War Museum Film and Video Archive, London

The arrival of a history of the British Film Institute is good news indeed. “Amazingly,” as the editors note in their introduction, “this dramatic story has never been told before, either in whole or (for many aspects) in part.” This welcome publication is the result of an extensive research project that began in 2004, funded by grants from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Other outcomes from that project have included the discovery, sorting, and cataloguing of parts of the Institute’s paper trail (and the reluctant conclusion that some documents are irretrievably lost), a quantity of digitisation for future online resources, and two exhibitions at BFI Southbank.

The present publication is not, as its editors admit, “an exhaustive study of the BFI and its various components”. Instead, it offers a “grand narrative” of the Institute’s history from 1933 to 2000 in six succinct chapters by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith which are interleaved with nine further chapters offering “probes in depth” into “particular significant aspects of the history of the BFI and the surrounding culture”. The extra chapters comprise (in addition to two others mentioned later) studies by Christophe Dupin on the BFI’s involvement with film exhibition in its first 40 years, by Richard MacDonald on the film society movement 1945-1965, by Melanie Self on the Institute’s relations with the British regions, by Terry Bolas on the history of BFI Education, particularly under Paddy Whannel, by Christophe Dupin



Ernest Lindgren (left) inspecting a film in the BFI’s viewing theatre along with BFI director Oliver Bell, assistant director R. W. Dickinson and technical director H. D. Waley in the late 1930s

on the Institute’s role in film production, by Richard Paterson on “The BFI and Television”, and by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith on *Sight & Sound*.

Potential readers will understand from this summary that this book is not a history of the National Film Archive. Although it provides an illuminating account of the context in which the NFA/NFTVA (now the BFI National Archive) operated for some 70 years, it does not have much to say about those operations. With the conspicuous exception of a truly excellent chapter by Christophe Dupin exploring the light thrown by newly rediscovered papers on the Lindgren/Langlois relationship, there is little in the book that specifically addresses the history of the BFI’s own archive, or of that archive’s role in FIAF and the wider world. There is, surprisingly, no mention at all of the two FIAF Congresses hosted by the BFI in Britain (the Brighton Congress in 1978, venue for the ground-breaking symposium “Cinema 1900-1906”, and the London Congress of 2000), and nothing about the BFI’s relationship with the other archives, national and regional, in the UK. There is also little, beyond accounts of organisational changes and geographical moves, about other aspects of the BFI’s services close to the archivist’s heart, such as library and information services or stills, posters and designs. Here are definitely some of the areas which, as the editors say, “each requires a volume of its own,” and we can only hope such books will appear at some stage.

Taking the book for what it is rather than what it is not, the reader will learn, as the title promises, a great deal about how successive chairs and directors of the BFI have struggled to navigate their way through the difficult political conditions caused by changes in government (or indeed changes of minister within government) manifesting widely variable levels of interest in the fate of British film and film culture, and the additional hazards thrown up by the changing fortunes of the national economy. Also examined are the part played in the Institute's history by its confrontations with the various suspicious arms of the British film and television industries, the occasional crises sparked by breakdowns in relationships with parts of the BFI membership, and organisational stresses and strains within the BFI itself. One story that emerges in later chapters concerns the BFI's relationship with Sir John Paul Getty, exploring not only the projects his generosity made possible but also the easy excuse it gave governments for failing to address their own responsibilities. Many of these themes come together in another excellent "probe-in-depth" chapter, Lorraine Blakemore's summary of her Ph.D. research into the sad and salutary story of the rise and fall of the Museum of the Moving Image.

The book cannot escape some of the characteristic problems of a multi-authored book with much to say in only 300 pages. There is, for example, some repetition and a few gaps between chapters with overlapping topics, but these hardly signify. A more serious cause for regret is that the story told in the book stops some way short of the present. Its avowed range is the period 1933-2000 (though Nowell-Smith contributes an epilogue which sketches further developments up to 2011), but in truth many details cease to be clear from about 1990. This may well be inevitable given the proximity of the events concerned, and the continuing lives and careers of most of the people involved, but there is a notable contrast between the clarity with which some earlier personality clashes and management crises are explored – not just the famous case of Lindgren and Langlois, but also such episodes as the falling-out between the BFI and Lindsay Anderson and the problem of John Huntley's "personal fiefdom" at Film Services – and the necessary caution evident in a sentence like this one, referring to 1995: "A mixture of retirements, resignations

(some forced) and redundancies had removed from the scene all the senior management left over from previous regimes."

The full story will no doubt be told some time. Meanwhile, this book fills an evident gap in our knowledge of the history of the BFI and official responses to film culture in Britain, and should stimulate further research into the topics it introduces, and, let us hope, further publications of the results of such research.

**THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE, THE GOVERNMENT AND FILM CULTURE, 1933-2000**, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith & Christophe Dupin, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2012; English, 331 pp., b&w illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 978-0-7190-7908-5

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Le titre est explicite et bien couvert en six chapitres descriptifs, plus un autre bloc de neuf chapitres traitant en profondeur d'un certain nombre d'épisodes spécifiques de l'histoire du BFI – notamment les activités de projections publiques, d'éducation et de production; les activités régionales et les relations avec les ciné-clubs; l'extension du mandat de l'institution pour y inclure la télévision et l'histoire de *Sight & Sound* et du Museum of the Moving Image. Le livre couvre la période 1933-2000; un bref épilogue permet au lecteur de se familiariser avec la période plus récente. Un tel ouvrage comble un vide évident dans l'étude des implications (financières et autres) officielles dans la culture cinématographique en Grande-Bretagne. L'auteur de la recension note cependant, qu'à l'exception d'un excellent chapitre sur les relations Lindgren-Langlois, on y consacre bien peu d'espace aux activités spécifiques de conservation du BFI, pas plus qu'aux relations de l'institution avec la FIAF et qu'enfin l'histoire récente est abordée avec moins de franchise que les événements plus anciens.

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El libro cubre los temas anunciados en su título en seis capítulos, con nueve capítulos adicionales conteniendo detalles de aspectos de la historia del BFI. Esto incluye las actividades del BFI en las áreas de la exhibición, educación, producción, así como sus relaciones con las regiones y las asociaciones profesionales, incluyendo la televisión y las respectivas historias de *Sight & Sound* y el Museum of the Moving Image.

El libro aborda la historia del BFI de 1933 a 2000 y concluye con un breve epílogo que permite al lector abordar con facilidad acontecimientos posteriores. La aparición de este volumen responde a la necesidad concreta de hacer avanzar el estudio de la cultura cinematográfica en Gran Bretaña, pero, con excepción de un excelente capítulo sobre la relación Lindgren/Langlois, aporta pocos elementos específicamente ligados a las actividades de archivos del BFI, ni sobre las relaciones de este último con la FIAF. Su historia reciente está, tal vez inevitablemente, reflejada con menos entusiasmo que los episodios anteriores de su historia.

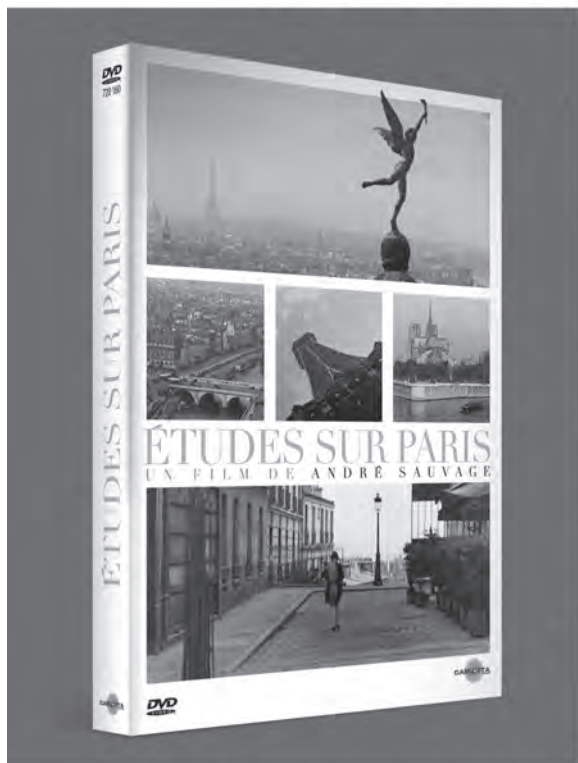


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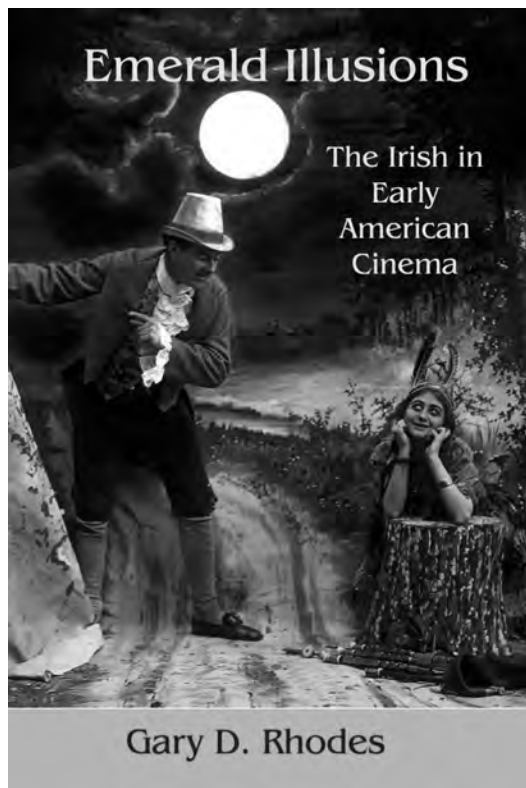
# Emerald Illusions: The Irish in Early American Cinema

**Kevin Rockett**

Professor, Trinity College Dublin. Irish film historian and scholar;  
Chairman of the Irish Film Institute, 1984-1991

Gary D. Rhodes' *Emerald Illusions* is an addition to scholarship on popular Irish-themed entertainments, especially film, in America from 1866 to 1915. Yet, ironically, given the title of the book (which might have been more accurately entitled *Emerald Allusions*, as the illusions, mostly film, are, after all, mainly *American* in origin), he is, to the detriment of his project, dismissive of most previous work on Irish-themed American films. He claims that the majority of film academics and writers since the "seminal" *Cinema and Ireland* (1987),<sup>2</sup> which charts the development of the cinema in Ireland and provides the first detailed analyses of key filmic representations of the Irish produced both in Ireland and elsewhere, have sought to treat Irish-themed films made in the USA as a branch of Irish cinema. Such an assertion ignores how a rich variety of scholars<sup>3</sup> have attempted to explore and deconstruct notions of Irishness within the popular imagination and address the often complex intersection between films made in Ireland and those made elsewhere about the Irish. It is, sadly, not an isolated lapse in Rhodes' critical or methodological approach.

1. A filmmaker and film historian, Rhodes has authored or edited a number of books, mostly published by McFarland since 1997, mainly on horror topics, including actor Bela Lugosi; director Edgar G. Ulmer; horror at the drive-in; and the film *White Zombie*.
2. Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons, and John Hill, *Cinema and Ireland*, London: Croom Helm, 1987; revised ed., London: Routledge, 1988.
3. Since the publication of *Cinema and Ireland* there have been more than 20 books, and numerous articles, on aspects of cinema and Ireland, including representations of the Irish. For a series of 18 inter-linked short bibliographical essays on Irish cinema and subsections, including on the Irish in American cinema, see Kevin Rockett, "Irish Cinema", in Krin Gabbard, ed., *Cinema and Media Studies*, Oxford Bibliographies Online, Oxford University Press, 2012. <[www.oxfordbibliographies.com](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com)>



Having, in an argumentative introduction, rejected the considerable body of work on representations of Ireland and the Irish within American cinema,<sup>4</sup> Rhodes presents his study as unprecedented in its exploration of Irish-related representations in early American cinema within the isolated cauldron of the American film industry. However, he fails to pursue his polemic with academic rigour, and does not, for example, address the nature of national cinema, most especially American. Consequently, the considerable differences even within American-produced fiction films between those made in Ireland – the first significant one being Kalem's *The Lad from Old Ireland* (1910) – and the much larger group made in the USA dealing with the Irish, as well as those partly set in Ireland, but made in the USA, is not adequately examined. Similarly, the other key word – Irishness – remains undefined, and instead "stage-Irish" characterization, often using non-Irish models and relying on gross "comic" exaggeration, is somewhat

4. Including, most recently, Christopher Shannon, *Bowery to Broadway: The American Irish in Classic Hollywood Cinema*, Scranton/London: University of Scranton, 2010.

simplistically juxtaposed against representations less obviously contrived which Rhodes impressionistically deems as “authentic”.

Such a methodological approach underlines his refusal to engage with either Irish film studies, or, more generally, the cultural and historical basis of such Irish representations. Indeed, no reference is made to L.P. Curtis’s germinal *Apes and Angels: The Irish in Victorian Caricature* (1971), which helps to contextualize the iteration of the “stage Irish” character from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whereby the simian characteristics attributed to Irish figures can be seen as part of a pre-/post-Darwinian colonial construct designed to dent the struggle for Irish self-determination and position the Irish as less developed than their (English) colonial masters. (Resistance by the Irish in Ireland and America to such “stage Irish” racist insults within the cinema reached its climax in America with the release of *The Callahans and the Murphys* in 1927, and in Ireland with the release, three years later, of *Smiling Irish Eyes* [1929].<sup>5</sup>)

Notwithstanding these considerable qualifications, recognition must be given for Rhodes having trawled the Irish-American press for material on cinema and on representations of the Irish, and for his showing how pre-cinema entertainments influenced early American cinema. While, with regard to the latter, there is nothing new about this in cinema scholarship – for example, Luke Gibbons has discussed the importance of Irish playwright Dion Boucicault’s melodramas to early cinema (a topic also explored by this writer)<sup>6</sup>, while William Williams has focused on Irish-themed popular songs<sup>7</sup> – Rhodes adds more Irish-themed titles and review descriptions to earlier studies. While *The Irish Filmography* (1996), compiled by this

writer,<sup>8</sup> includes roughly 400 American Irish-themed titles for the period covered by Rhodes’ chronicle, a great many of which feature in Rhodes’ lists, he adds as much as half that again. (He also gives extensive lists of romantic and comic Irish narratives in song and other slide sets.) Nevertheless, instead of seeing his work as contributing to a bigger project already significantly formed by others, he positions himself as pioneering. He criticises Irish writers for not referring to *Chinese Laundry* (Edison, 1894), identified by Charles Musser as perhaps the first ethnic “Irish” film (though featuring Italian comics), yet it is included (with a screen grab image of the film) in this writer’s 2011 study of pre- and early cinema popular visual entertainments in Ireland.<sup>9</sup> More problematic is his “discovery” of a 1908 Biograph film, *Caught by Wireless*, which he discusses as the first film to depict an Irish migrant story. Not only does this miss the point of the film, as it is uninterested in nationality, only in promoting the power of modern technology in the form of Marconi’s wireless communication system, but also the film is not obviously coded as Irish – unlike the *The Lad from Old Ireland*, which is an explicitly Irish-themed narrative – and can only be interpreted as such with recourse to a contemporary published synopsis.<sup>10</sup> Later in his discussion of the film, Rhodes incorrectly collapses the characters of landlord and rent collector.<sup>11</sup>

Having presented chapters on theatre, magic lantern slides, film (broken down into three “genres” of non-fiction, comedy, and melodrama) and Irish characters, Rhodes

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5. On *The Callahans and the Murphys*, see Joseph M. Curran, *Hibernian Green on the Silver Screen: The Irish and American Movies*, New York/Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1989; on *Smiling Irish Eyes*, see Rockett, et al., *Cinema and Ireland*, 1987, pp. 53-55.

6. “Dion Boucicault, Staging, and Early Cinema”, *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, LXVIII, nos. 1-2, Autumn 2006-Winter 2007, pp. 33-59.

7. William H.A. Williams, *‘Twas Only an Irishman’s Dream: The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800-1920*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996.

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8. Kevin Rockett, ed./compiler, *The Irish Filmography*, Dublin: Red Mountain Media, 1996. This volume is now included as part of Irish Film & TV Research Online, <[www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>.

9. Kevin Rockett and Emer Rockett, *Magic Lantern, Panorama and Moving Picture Shows in Ireland, 1786-1909*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011.

10. Though as early as 1905 Biograph was inserting intertitles to impose coherence on a film, I am unaware as to whether this was the case with this film, as the only version I have seen, as included on the 2006 Grapevine Video DVD *Griffith as an Actor*, has no intertitles. Without the published synopsis there is no way of definitively reading the character played by D.W. Griffith, or the troubled family, as Irish, apart perhaps from his becoming a policeman in New York. Indeed, the reference to Scotland Yard in the synopsis, not to mention the dress and general *mise-en-scène*, particularly of the landlord, could easily suggest England, or anywhere in the British Isles.

11. Rhodes, 2012, p. 20. A more accurate account of the film, which makes no reference to Ireland, can be found in Kemp R. Niver, *Early Motion Pictures: The Paper Print Collection in the Library of Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1985, p. 50.

concludes his study with a useful discussion of audiences. This chapter contains a timely reminder that despite the forensic studies of the American cinema audience of the nickelodeon period we are no nearer to an understanding of its variety in terms of ethnicity, age, class, and gender than we were before scholars such as Russell Merritt, Robert C. Allen, Robert Sklar, and Ben Singer undertook work on New York audiences in particular from the 1970s onwards. In this regard, easy assumptions that Irish-themed films were produced in the first instance for Irish audiences are challenged. Such Irish-themed films – perhaps 600 or more prior to 1915, representing only a fraction of the total American films released – were as likely to have been seen by general audiences as Irish/Irish-American ones.

In summary, the value of Rhodes' study, which is an old-fashioned history in the sense that it is primarily a listing of pre- and early cinema Irish-themed shows and films, is in its collation, rather than critical engagement with, or cultural interpretation of, material. Although it is only by interrogating the variety of versions of Irishness constructed, by whom, and for what ideological and entertainment purposes, that we can more fully appreciate the complex cultural processes at work in representations of the Irish in American pre- and early cinema, *Emerald Illusions* will serve as a sourcebook to complement and embellish existing lists of Irish-themed films, such as are found in *The Irish Filmography* and at <[www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>.

**EMERALD ILLUSIONS:  
THE IRISH IN EARLY AMERICAN CINEMA,**  
Gary D. Rhodes, Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2012.  
432 pp., illus. ISBN: 978-0716531432

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La première étude universitaire consacrée au cinéma irlandais et à la représentation des Irlandais dans le cinéma britannique et dans le cinéma américain date de 1987: *Cinema and Ireland* de Kevin Rockett marque en effet l'émergence des travaux de recherche sur le cinéma irlandais. Depuis lors plus de vingt livres ont été publiés sur le sujet, *Emerald Illusions* de Gary D. Rhodes étant le dernier en liste. Le livre traite des divertissements, notamment des films, à thèmes irlandais, aux États-Unis, de 1866 à 1915. Il aurait d'ailleurs pu s'intituler plus justement *Emerald Allusions*, étant donné que les «illusions», principalement dans le cas des films, sont presque essentiellement d'origine américaine. Le livre s'ouvre par une introduction polémique, mais a tôt fait de révéler ses limites méthodologiques importantes en ce qu'il refuse largement de tenir compte des études universitaires, riches et nombreuses, notamment celles qui traitent déjà des films américains avec thématiques irlandaises. Après avoir consacré des chapitres au théâtre, aux lanternes magiques et aux films (partagés en trois «genres»: non-fiction, comédie, mélodrame), Rhodes termine son travail par une discussion pourtant fort utile sur les publics. Voici donc un livre d'histoire à l'ancienne, en ce sens qu'il s'agit d'abord et avant tout d'une liste de films et de spectacles de pré-cinéma, ou de cinéma des premiers temps, qui incluent des thèmes irlandais. L'intérêt du livre est ailleurs, dans son travail de collationnement, plutôt que dans son entreprise critique ou son interprétation culturelle d'un matériau. *Emerald Illusions* sera utile comme outil de référence pour compléter et rehausser les listes de films à thèmes irlandais déjà existantes, comme celle qu'on trouve dans *The Irish Filmography* de 1996, ou sur le site Web <[www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>.

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La investigación cinematográfica del cine irlandés entró en su edad adulta con *Cinema and Ireland* (1987) por Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons y John Hill. Se trata del primer estudio académico de la historia del cine irlandés y de cómo los irlandeses fueron representados en el cine británico y americano. Desde entonces, más de 20 libros fueron publicados sobre el tema, siendo *Emerald Illusions* de Gary D. Rhodes el último de ellos. El libro trata de géneros de distracción popular irlandeses, especialmente cine, en América de 1866 a 1915. Curiosamente, y dado el título del libro (que podría titularse *Emerald Allusions*, más que *Illusions*, ya que alude principalmente a películas americanas), pasa por alto una gran parte de los trabajos previos sobre películas de temas irlandeses en el cine americano. Luego de una introducción un tanto polémica, el autor parecería resistirse a aprovechar los valiosos aportes de la investigación irlandesa en general. No obstante, luego de desarrollar capítulos sobre teatro, proyecciones de lanternas mágicas, exhibiciones de películas (divididas en tres "géneros" de no-ficción, comedia y melodrama), y personajes irlandeses, Rhodes concluye su estudio con una interesante discusión sobre las audiencias. El interés de este libro, reside en su esfuerzo de recopilación más que en su compromiso crítico o interpretativo del material analizado. *Emerald Illusions* va a servir como fuente suplementaria para completar y mejorar listados de películas sobre temas irlandeses, como las que se pueden encontrar en *La Filmografía Irlandesa (The Irish Filmography, 1996)* y en <[www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>.

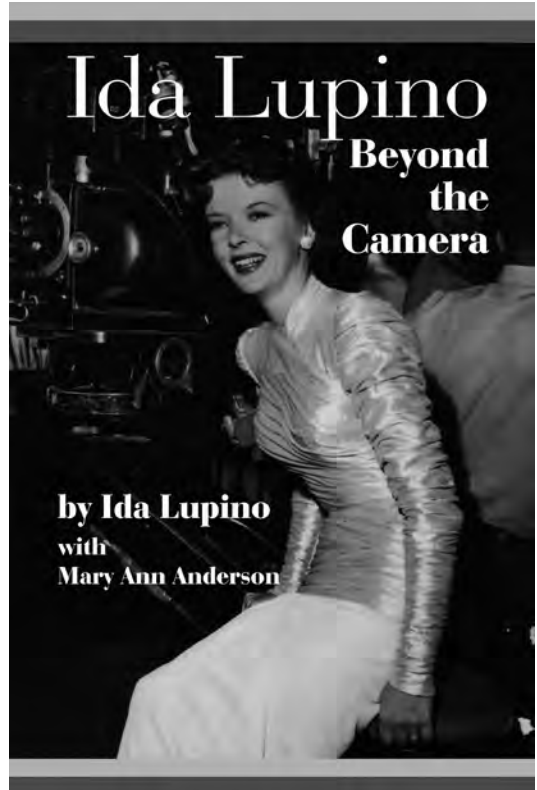
# Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera

Anne Morra

Associate Curator, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art,  
New York

Having curated a retrospective of her work in 2010, I was particularly excited by the prospect of *Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera*, the much-anticipated publication featuring autobiographical text by actress/director/producer Ida Lupino with assistance from Mary Ann Anderson. Halfway through the book, I felt the need to reacquaint myself with the standard definitions of *autobiography* (a history of a person's life either written or told by that person) and *memoir* (biography or historical account, especially one based on personal knowledge) as the shifting writing styles began to perplex me. These definitions did little to shed light on the category of book I was reading. Distracted from the primary text, I began to search further and came across Gore Vidal's definition of memoir, in his own, *Palimpsest*: "a memoir is how one remembers one's own life, while an autobiography is history, requiring research, dates, facts double-checked."<sup>1</sup> Yes! That's it. *Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera* is certainly more memoir than autobiography, prompted not only by its informal and sociable tone, but the impression that the information and research is more anecdotal and reliant upon misty memory than exhaustive digging.

The foreword, written by Lupino, is an introspective, informative, and all-too-brief chapter about a most talented woman whose range of history in the film industry is partially lost, due to a business that was not ready to include women in the upper strata of its caste system at mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a public that wanted her to remain an actress, and a symbiotic relationship between film archives and film studios that had yet to be formed in the cause of keeping track of film elements.



Lupino retells the story of her father, the British musical comedy star Stanley Lupino, taking her for a tour of the Elstree studios near London. Crossing an editing room, Ida recalled the bits and pieces of film strewn across the floor. Her father counseled that the faces on those pieces of celluloid are important, but "the man who determines what pieces [remain] is the most important of all. He is the director. Just remember that!"<sup>2</sup> Lupino did remember, and when she had permission from Warner Bros. – where she was a prized contract actress – to spend time in the editing suites as an observer, she was a keen student. These moments behind the scenes whetted her appetite to move to a more creative role, and in 1949 she produced *Not Wanted* with then-husband Collier Young. As fate would have it, director Elmer Clifton suffered a heart attack just days before shooting began. Quietly, efficiently, and expertly, Ida Lupino manned the director's chair with a still-weak Clifton sitting behind her. While Ida's genuine role on the set of *Not Wanted* was kept quiet – as evidenced

1. Gore Vidal, *Palimpsest: A Memoir*, Penguin, 1996, p. 5

2. Ida Lupino and Mary Ann Anderson, *Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera*, Albany, Georgia: Bear Manor Media, 2011, Foreword, p. X

by the on-screen director's credit going to Clifton – according to William Donati's 1996 biography Lupino invited her idol Dorothy Arzner to see a rough cut: "We're running the first cut of the first one I've directed."<sup>3</sup>

Chapter 1 begins in 1983, with Mary Ann Anderson, the daughter of longtime *General Hospital* television soap opera actress Emily McLaughlin Hunter, bringing Lupino flowers on the occasion of her 65th birthday. Ida had effectively ceased her television and film acting career by 1978 with an episode of *Charlie's Angels* and the feature film *My Boys Are Good Boys*. By the early 1980s Ida remained in Brentwood Heights behind the heavy gates of her once well-maintained home. When Anderson, who later became her court-appointed conservator in 1984, tried to deliver the flowers, Lupino threatened to hose her down as she was being interrupted while watering the lawn! This unexpected meeting precipitated a deep and mutual friendship that lasted until Lupino's death in 1995.

Abundantly illustrated with on-location stills, personal photos, and posters, the book is divided into 21 brief chapters, with headings such as "The Duchess of Dirt vs. The Queen of the Phones", "The Conservatorship of Ida Lupino", and "Enter Howard Duff". The reader is provided with a capsule snapshot of key events in Lupino's personal and professional life, bolstered by Anderson's reverent point of view. For example, the pinnacle moment in Lupino's professional career was the 1949 establishment of Emerald Productions (named in honor of her mother, British actress Connie Emerald). The company's name was soon changed to The Filmmakers – what Anderson rightly calls "a defining statement of intent"<sup>4</sup> – and remained in business until 1954. In this fundamental chapter, readers would have gained immeasurable historic insight into the unconventional and astonishing slate of films to come from The Filmmakers had the authors provided a comprehensive blueprint for imagining this production company.

In its place the text is peppered with negligible comments attributed to the usually sharp-witted Lupino, such as "believe me, I fought to produce and direct my own pictures".<sup>5</sup> When Lupino talks about the preproduction of the company's first film, *Not Wanted*, the story of an unwanted pregnancy, she recalls visiting a local Los Angeles courthouse, where she observed the trial of a young woman detained for loitering. It turned out the young woman was pregnant, and this firsthand experience of seeing how the law and society responded to the girl and her dilemma galvanized Lupino's intention to make *Not Wanted*. Knowing that the Production Code Administration (PCA), the arbiter of what was and was not *proper* on screen, would frown upon the realistic and raw content of *Not Wanted*, Lupino commented: "I had to use my star power and negotiate with the Production Code representative to get *Not Wanted* made."<sup>6</sup> The book does not elaborate on exactly what Lupino did to cajole or persuade the PCA, resulting in the production and release of *Not Wanted* in June 1949. What *Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera* desperately needs at a meaningful junction such as this is expansive and trustworthy data based on reliable recollections corroborated by colleagues, letters, studio files, and hard research. In an account of Ida Lupino's work and contributions as a writer, director, and producer of films with socially brave and startling subject matter (i.e., rape, unwanted pregnancy, bigamy), readers require a more complete view into how she navigated a caste system that did not include women and did not want to see films with unpopular messages made.

There is certainly more fundamental research work and publication to be done on the gifted but brief career of Ida Lupino, director. While *Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera* does not significantly move the ball ahead towards the goal of a clear understanding of Lupino's directorial motivation, ambition, determination, triumph, and disappointment, what the book does handsomely provide is a rich visual timeline of images that show Lupino as a young, lithe Harlow-like blonde just arrived from England in the 1930s through to a poised, mature woman

3. William Donati, *Ida Lupino: A Biography*, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996, p. 152

4. Ida Lupino and Mary Ann Anderson, *Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera*, p. 83

5. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 84.



comfortable behind the camera. The photo album aspect of the book is comforting for those of us who idolize Lupino, but much scholarly work remains to be done.

The merit of a book like *Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera*, even with its narrow lens, is that it maintains the focus on an actress and filmmaker whose directorial career is becoming increasingly difficult to study. While The Museum of Modern Art has preserved *Never Fear (The Young Lovers; 1950)* and the UCLA Film & Television Archive has preserved *Hard, Fast, and Beautiful (1951)* and *The Bigamist (1953)*, the whereabouts of certain negatives and viewing prints of the films produced by The Filmakers are unknown at this time.

**IDA LUPINO: BEYOND THE CAMERA,**  
Ida Lupino and Mary Ann Anderson, Albany City,  
Georgia: Bear Manor Media, 2011. English, 167 pp., b&w  
illustrations, notes, filmography, index. ISBN 1593936729

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Ida Lupino (1918-1995), qui fut réalisatrice et productrice, fut d'abord actrice sous contrat avec la Paramount, puis avec Warner Bros. En 1949, alors qu'elle était mariée à Collier Young, l'un des administrateurs de Columbia Pictures, elle créa sa propre compagnie de production, Emerald Productions, qui devint par la suite The Filmakers. Entre 1949 et 1954, huit films furent produits par The Filmakers, Lupino en réalisant elle-même cinq. Le livre en rubrique, un objet hybride, en partie autobiographie, en partie mémoires, fut écrit par Lupino avec l'aide de sa curatrice, Mary Ann Anderson. Abondamment illustré avec des photos de plateau et des photos personnelles, le livre met en lumière la longue carrière d'actrice de Lupino aussi bien que sa carrière plus brève en tant que productrice-réalisatrice. Vu l'indigence des recherches et les connaissances limitées du sujet en cause, *Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera* est assurément un livre précieux pour les admirateurs de cette femme aux multiples talents; il n'en demeure pas moins qu'on attend toujours un travail de recherche plus sérieux. Mais une telle recherche sur la riche carrière d'Ida Lupino comme productrice/réalisatrice s'avère de plus en plus difficile, la disponibilité des films (en copies film ou sur DVD) qui permettraient l'étude de ce corpus extraordinaire étant pour le moment fort limitée.

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La actriz, directora y productora Ida Lupino (1918-1995) conoció un período de éxito en la época de su contrato con la Paramount Pictures y luego con la Warner Bros. En 1949, junto con su esposo, el ejecutivo de la Columbia Pictures Collier Young, Lupino estableció su propia productora, Emerald Productions, más adelante rebautizada The Filmakers. Entre 1949 y 1954 The Filmakers produjo 8 películas, de las cuales Ida Lupino oficialmente dirigió cinco.

*Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera*, es una mezcla de autobiografía y memorias escritas con la asistencia de su curadora Mary Ann Anderson. Generosamente ilustrada con fotografías de estudio y privadas, este libro ilustra simultáneamente su larga carrera de actriz y su corta carrera de productora y directora.

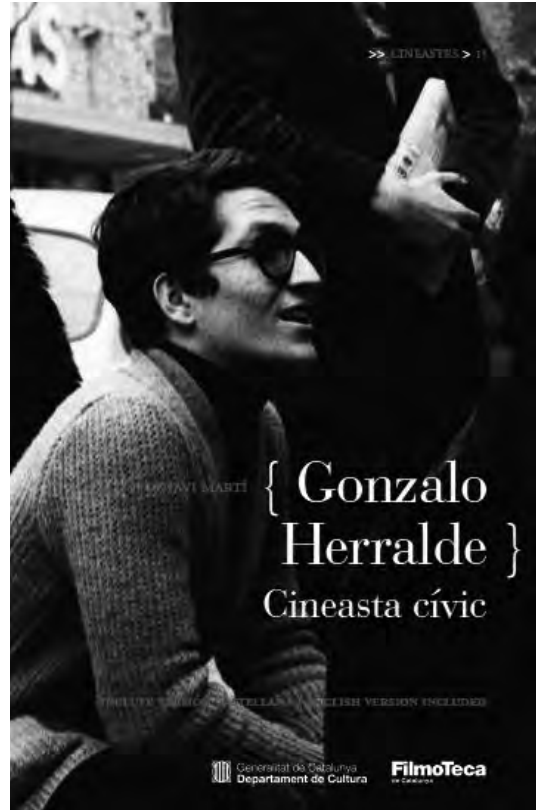
A pesar de la escasez de medios de investigación, *Ida Lupino: Beyond the Camera* presenta un gran interés para los adeptos de esta excepcional cineasta polivalente. Indiscutiblemente, Lupino sigue siendo un tema para quienes desean proseguir investigando de manera más exhaustiva su trayectoria. Desafortunadamente, resulta cada día más difícil reunir los medios necesarios para seguir investigando su carrera de productora y directora. El fondo de copias disponibles para su visualización (sobre película, DVDs) y para permitir un estudio de su excepcional obra es limitado.

# Gonzalo Herralde. Cineasta cívic

Natacha Laurent

Déléguée générale, Cinémathèque de Toulouse

Le sous-titre de ce livre est révélateur du projet d'Octavi Martí: bien plus qu'un simple récit chronologique, l'ouvrage qu'il vient de consacrer à Gonzalo Herralde est tout à la fois une passionnante biographie et une contribution importante à l'histoire du cinéma catalan. Né en 1949 à Barcelone, Gonzalo Herralde suit d'abord des études de médecine, puis se passionne pour le théâtre à l'Escola d'Art Dramàtic Adrià Gual, où il rencontre notamment Ricard Salvat et Maria Aurèlia Capmany et où naît son attachement profond pour le théâtre – «je découvris alors que je voulais apprendre à travailler avec les acteurs, mais en même temps que je ne voulais pas devenir acteur moi-même», dit-il. Alors même que le franquisme vit ses dernières heures, il tourne ses premiers courts-métrages et, persuadé que le langage est toujours un engagement, il s'attache à explorer différentes formes qui sont autant d'oppositions à la dictature. Dès lors cette curiosité ne le quitte plus: qu'il s'agisse des documentaires comme *Raza, el espíritu de Franco* (1977) ou *El asesino de Pedralbes* (1978), des fictions comme *Últimas tardes con Teresa* (1983) ou *Laura, del cielo llega la noche* (1987), de la série de films qu'il a consacrés récemment à de grands architectes (2007-2011) ou de captations de spectacles (comme *Torre Barona* en 2008), Gonzalo Herralde affirme sa vocation, selon le beau vocable choisi par Octavi Martí, de «passeur». Constamment animé par la volonté de contribuer à une meilleure diffusion du patrimoine culturel catalan, il s'efforce toujours de faire dialoguer différents univers culturels et de stimuler la curiosité des uns et des autres – ce qui constitue, comme le montre Octavi Martí, le fondement de son engagement de «cinéaste-citoyen».



Grâce à une attention permanente, et toujours très précise au contexte socio-culturel, l'auteur de cet ouvrage, lui-même réalisateur, également critique, et désormais directeur-adjoint de la Filmoteca de Catalunya, en charge de la programmation, permet au lecteur de mieux comprendre l'itinéraire de Gonzalo Herralde, et sa spécificité. Explorer la réalité par le cinéma, et plus précisément ce qu'elle a de plus difficilement saisissable (à cause de la censure, des mécanismes d'oubli, des problèmes de conservation, des forces qui tendent à une homogénéisation du patrimoine culturel), tel est l'engagement de ce réalisateur catalan. L'ouvrage d'Octavi Martí rassemble trois versions (en catalan, en castillan, et en anglais), une filmographie complète, un cahier de photographies, et s'impose donc désormais comme l'ouvrage de référence sur cet auteur majeur qu'est Gonzalo Herralde.

**GONZALO HERRALDE. CINEASTA CÍVIC,**  
Octavi Martí, Filmoteca de Catalunya, Barcelone, 2011,  
Collection «Cineastes» no. 15, 213 p. Avec filmographie,  
bibliographie, index; illustrations en n&b et en couleurs.  
ISBN: 978-84-393-8797-8



*Últimas tardes con Teresa* (Gonzalo Herralde, 1983): Maribel Martín et Ángel Alcázar

en

Much more than a chronological account of the work of Gonzalo Herralde, this fascinating biography by filmmaker, critic, and journalist Octavi Martí, published by the Filmoteca de Catalunya, is an important contribution to Catalan film history. Its subtitle, "Cineasta cívic" ("A Civic-Minded Filmmaker"), is extremely appropriate for this engaged filmmaker. Cinema can be used to explore reality: Gonzalo Herralde (born in 1949), an essential filmmaker, has believed this from his first film (an underground work, in political terms openly at war with the Franco regime) right up to his recent work to preserve the memory of fleeting experiences: plays, television broadcasts, meetings with writers, exhibitions, etc. He was the first in Spain to psychoanalyse the dictator Franco on film, the first to allow us to look a murderer in the eyes, and the first to remind us how all gold rushes end. He has often been deliberately out of step, anticipating events or focusing on what we lose through neglect, lack of awareness, or lack of respect for a country's cultural heritage. The text is in three languages, Catalan, Castilian Spanish, and English; hopefully this should contribute to making Herralde's work much better known outside Spain.

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Mucho más que una reseña histórica de la obra de Gonzalo Herralde, esta fascinante biografía escrita por el director, crítico y periodista Octavi Martí, publicada por la Filmoteca de Catalunya, constituye una importante contribución a la historia del cine catalán. El subtítulo, "Cineasta cívic" ("Un director con sentido cívico"), corresponde de sobremana a este director políticamente comprometido. El cine puede ser utilizado para explorar la realidad: Gonzalo Herralde (nacido en 1949), director esencial, profesaba este credo desde su primer obra (una película underground, en términos políticos abiertamente en guerra con el régimen de Franco) hasta su obra más reciente destinada a preservar la memoria de experiencias efímeras: obras de teatro, programas de televisión, encuentros con escritores, exposiciones, etc. Herralde fue el primero en efectuar un análisis psicológico de Franco el dictador en una película, el primero que nos permitió mirar a un asesino en los ojos, y el primero en recordarnos cómo terminan todas las fiebres del oro. A menudo se ubicó fuera de los carriles habituales, anticipando acontecimientos, concentrándose sobre lo que perdemos por negligencia o falta de consciencia, o lo que perdemos por falta de respeto por el legado cultural de un país. Su obra merece ser conocida mucho mejor fuera de España. El libro está editado en tres idiomas, en catalán, Castellano e Inglés. Es de esperar que esto contribuya a su mejor difusión internacional.

# Die freudlose Gasse

## Éric Le Roy

Président de la FIAF; Chef du Service accès, valorisation et enrichissement des collections, Archives françaises du film du CNC, Paris-Bois d'Arcy

*Die freudlose Gasse (La Rue sans joie)* n'est pas seulement l'un des films les plus importants de la République de Weimar, mais aussi, pour nous autres archivistes et historiens, un cas d'école.

Dans une Vienne reconstituée en studio à Berlin, *Die freudlose Gasse* n'invente pas une nouvelle forme de cinéma mais cherche un réalisme irrigué d'expressionnisme, fuyant le temps et l'espace traditionnel, et s'appuie sur une certaine synthèse des recherches esthétiques de l'époque.

Un Pabst que l'on peut qualifier d'« anarchisant » apparaît ici en pleine possession de sa technique, sûr de sa vision du monde, sensible à la beauté féminine en même temps qu'à la violence insurrectionnelle des opprimés. Dans *Die freudlose Gasse*, il effleure avec volupté, par touches raffinées, les visages d'Asta Nielsen et de Greta Garbo, celle-ci étant particulièrement bien cadrée en quelques gros plans magnifiques. De l'expressionnisme, le cinéaste conserve certains moyens (ombres portées, clair-obscur, espaces contrastés), qu'il articule sobrement : l'influence du *Kammerspiel*, toujours cité à propos de ce film, est indiscutable.

*Die freudlose Gasse* obtint en Allemagne, puis dans le monde entier, un succès considérable. Avec ce film, Garbo signa des contrats et partit aux États-Unis, et la renommée de Pabst fut instantanée. L'irritation des censeurs joua le rôle d'un ferment publicitaire. Car le film eu beaucoup d'ennuis avec la censure et fût mutilé dès sa sortie. Les séquences du boucher regardant passer les femmes et lorgnant leurs jambes par le soupirail ou attirant les clientes dans sa boutique pour leur faire payer « en nature » le droit de recevoir un morceau de viande, ces séquences furent coupées à la

suite d'une protestation de l'association allemande des bouchers. Un peu plus tard, aux États-Unis, le film fut remonté, amputé des grandes scènes d'Asta Nielsen pour donner la vedette à Garbo : il était alors annoncé comme une étude sur la prostitution. Puis, plus tard encore, il fut même sonorisé !

D'un point de vue technique, Pabst a travaillé son film avec une précision technique d'orfèvre, en choisissant un autre type de pellicule (la Kodak, procurée par Paris) que celle habituellement employée en Allemagne (Agfa) : cela donne un ton plus doux et moins brutal aux images, déjà violentes par leur contenu. Par ailleurs, il s'est servi d'autres artifices pour transformer l'image et lui donner plus d'effets dramatiques.

Le destin du film a été celui d'autres œuvres majeures et dérangelantes du cinéma européen, édités en plusieurs versions, exportés, remontés, victimes de plusieurs censures, et restaurés à plusieurs reprises et pas toujours fidèlement... À ce jour, aucune copie complète n'a survécu, et toutes celles qui ont subsisté possédaient de sérieuses différences, avant cette restauration (qui est en fait une véritable reconstitution) achevée en 2009, qui se présente comme la plus proche de la version originale soit deux heures et demi. Du jamais vu. En effet, la version actuelle, à qui il manque encore 600 mètres, a employé plusieurs matériels d'inégales valeurs et qualités pour aboutir à cette copie de référence, fruit d'un travail de comparaison et de remontage exemplaire, avec intégration de nouveaux intertitres et choix de teintages, sous l'autorité de Stefan Drössler.

L'édition DVD comporte non seulement la restauration, mais également, sur un disque séparé, un documentaire autrichien de 1991, *Der andere Blick* (dans une version modifiée en 2009), un autre sur Pabst, des scènes non retenues du film, et les souvenirs de Mark Sorkin, l'assistant de Pabst. De plus, près de 700 documents sur le film, la production, la musique, la correspondance, et la censure sont disponibles sous forme de fichiers pdf, complétés par un livret illustré de photos et de documents, avec des textes majoritairement en allemand, signés Klaus Volkmer, Stefan Drössler, et Werner Sudendorf.

*Die freudlose Gasse* est visible sous différentes possibilités, ce qui est très appréciable : avec accompagnement musical (très sobre, au piano, violon et violoncelle par Aljoscha Zimmermann) ou muet, en version allemande et en version allemande sous-titrée en anglais.

L'ensemble de cette troisième édition date de 2010 (deux autres de 2009 l'ont précédée) et constitue un véritable appareil pour la découverte du film, son univers, et ses racines formelles, mais aussi sur la complexité de sa restauration, sans oublier les questions qui se posent à l'occasion d'un travail aussi vivifiant pour un restaurateur.

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A review of the DVD released by the Munich Filmmuseum of G.W. Pabst's *The Joyless Street* (*Die freudlose Gasse*, Germany, 1925), in its most recent restoration. The restored film, one of the most important of the Weimar Republic, is a case study for film archivists and historians on the difficulties of restoration from a variety of materials.

The film may be viewed in several versions: with musical accompaniment (by Aljoscha Zimmermann) or silent; in the German version, or in German with English subtitles.

In addition to the film itself, the DVD contains the Austrian documentary *Der andere Blick* (1991, in a 2009 version), plus another documentary on Pabst; outtakes from the film; and reminiscences of Mark Sorkin, Pabst's assistant. Furthermore, nearly 700 documents on the production, the music, the correspondence, and censorship are available as a PDF file. An illustrated booklet, with texts mostly in German by Klaus Volkmer, Stefan Drössler, and Werner Sudendorf, completes the supplementary material.

**DIE FREUDLOSE GASSE (1925, Georg Wilhelm Pabst).**  
2-DVD, Édition Filmmuseum 48. Édité par Filmmuseum München, en collaboration avec le Goethe-Institut Munich et la Deutsche Kinemathek Berlin, 2010.  
PAL, code 0 (toutes régions) ; 151 min., n&b et couleurs ; format : 4:3, format d'origine 1.33:1; Dolby Digital 2.0.  
Version allemande (intertitres et langue des bonus), sous-titres anglais. DVD authoring : Ralph Schermbach; DVD supervision : Stefan Drössler.

es

*Die freudlose Gasse* (*La calle sin alegría*) no es sólo una de las películas más importantes de la República de Weimar, sino también, para nosotros, archivistas e historiadores, un caso de escuela en lo que se refiere a las desdichadas aventuras del negativo y de las copias tanto en Alemania como en el extranjero. El tema de la película, su contexto social luego de la Primera Guerra Mundial, la visión mórbida y decadente de la sociedad, escandalizaron a los espectadores. La percepción de la obra de Pabst sufrió mucho de esta situación.

El Filmmuseum München, que posee una excepcional colección de obras poco conocidas de todas las épocas, propone la restauración más acabada hasta hoy de la célebre película de Pabst, así como material documental que nos permite evaluar su valor artístico e histórico, considerándola en su contexto y ubicándola en el centro de la trayectoria de su autor, G. W. Pabst. Los dos CDs no solo contienen la versión reconstituída de la película, sino también una documental austriaca de 1991, *Der andere Blick* (versión modificada en 2009), otra documental sobre Pabst, escenas no utilizadas de *Die freudlose Gasse*, y los recuerdos de Mark Sorkin, el asistente de Pabst. Adicionalmente, cerca de 700 documentos sobre la película, la producción, la música, la correspondencia, y la censura se encuentran disponibles en forma de ficheros PDF, con un folleto adicional de fotografías y documentos, con textos - principalmente en alemán-, firmados Klaus Volkmer, Stefan Drössler y Werner Sudendorf. *Die freudlose Gasse* se puede ver en diferentes versiones: con acompañamiento musical (Aljoscha Zimmermann al piano, violín y violoncelo) o muda, en versión alemana y en versión alemana subtitulada en inglés.

Esta tercer edición data de 2010 (dos otras, de 2009 y 2008 la precedieron) y constituye un paso importante en el descubrimiento de la película, su universo, sus raíces formales y para el estudio de la complejidad de su restauración, sin olvidar los retos que se plantean a la hora de un trabajo tan estimulante como este a todo restaurador.





*Die freudlose Gasse* (1925, G.W. Pabst): Asta Nielsen, Hertha von Walther, Werner Krauss

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# On the Bowery: The Deluxe DVD Edition

## Ed Carter

Documentary Curator, Academy Film Archive, Los Angeles

One of the classics of documentary cinema, Lionel Rogosin's *On the Bowery* (1956) rose from humble beginnings. Rogosin and his cinematographer Richard Bagley spent months researching the film with long drinking and talking bouts with the Bowery's down-and-outs (Bagley died from alcohol abuse just a couple of years later). Though American Ambassador to Italy Claire Boothe Luce snubbed the film at the Venice Film Festival and the *New York Times* critic Bosley Crowther attacked the film as making no new points about its subjects, Rogosin gained support from the Flaherty family and many favorable reviews. *On the Bowery* went on to win wide acclaim and numerous awards, including an Oscar nomination. It was added to America's National Film Registry in 2008.

Milestone Film has released a terrific two-disc DVD of *On the Bowery*. It's an immersive experience into the film, the physical environment of New York's (in)famous neighborhood, and Rogosin's early career. You really get a sense of the place, the men who lived there, and the history of the Bowery. Of course the film can stand alone, but this package gives a rich overview that only adds to the understanding of the complexities of the film. The feature looks particularly good, with a pristine transfer, from the preserved materials at the Cineteca di Bologna.

In his introduction to the film on Disc One, Martin Scorsese notes not only the historical and aesthetic significance of the film, but his personal connection to it, as it was filmed near where he grew up in Little Italy. Along with the feature, several extras give broader scope to the locale and to the filmmaking process.

*Street of Forgotten Men* (1933) shows that the conditions there have a long history. *Bowery Men's Shelter* (1972, preserved by the New York Public Library) demonstrates that, even with a more substantial governmental safety net, things hadn't changed much in 20 years.

The longest supplementary piece on Disc One is *The Perfect Team: The Making of On the Bowery* (2009) by Rogosin's son Michael. It includes excerpts from a *Today Show* television interview of Lionel Rogosin and "star" Ray Salyer; Marina Goldovskaya's interviews with Rogosin; and a history of the Bowery. Film historians David Bordwell and Ray Carney examine the film's importance to film culture. The son of cameraman Darwin Deen and the widow of editor Carl Lerner give insights into the process of making the film. We also learn what happened later to some of the men seen in the film.

In Michael Rogosin's *A Walk Through the Bowery* (2009), Rob Hollander and Peter von Bagh talk about how the Bowery has changed over the years, and what it looks like today.

Disc Two features more of Rogosin's early work. *Good Times, Wonderful Times* (1964) intercuts a London party full of inane prattle with footage of war and atrocities around the world. *Out* (1957), a United Nations film shot by Rogosin, shows the plight of Hungarian refugees fleeing the 1956 revolution in Austrian camps. Michael Rogosin's *Man's Peril: The Making of Good Times, Wonderful Times* (2009) includes more of Goldovskaya's Rogosin interviews, as well as other commentary.

A supplementary booklet includes a thorough Rogosin biography and filmography, a history and analysis of *On the Bowery*, and short biographies of the film's cast and crew.

*On the Bowery* must have stood out as a thorn among roses when released in 1956, with style and subject matter far outside the norm of contemporary documentaries. Though its blend of fact and drama would not be considered non-fiction today, films of this type were definitely in the mainstream of documentary filmmaking at the time. However, one need only compare its competition for the 1957 Academy Award in the Documentary



*On the Bowery* (US, 1956, Lionel Rogosin)

Feature category to see what a radical departure it was. The Oscar winner that year was *Albert Schweitzer*, an affectionate biography of the humanitarian doctor-philosopher. The other nominee, *Torero!*, was a portrait of the Mexican bullfighter Luis Procuna. Other feature docs submitted (but not nominated) that year included *The James Dean Story* (co-directed by Robert Altman), the silent film compilation *The Golden Age of Comedy*, Disney's *Mars and Beyond*, and the docudrama *Williamsburg: The Story of a Patriot*. All worthy films, no doubt, but all worlds away from the denizens of Manhattan's Lower East Side.

**ON THE BOWERY: THE DELUXE DVD EDITION. THE FILMS OF LIONEL ROGOSIN, VOLUME 1.** Milestone Film & Video, 2012. 2-disc DVD, Region 1; main feature 65 minutes, with 187 minutes of extras, and booklet.

fr

*On the Bowery* (1956) de Lionel Rogosin est devenu un classique du cinéma documentaire, universellement célébré, récipiendaire de plusieurs prix et nommé pour un Oscar. Le coffret de deux disques récemment publié par Milestone Films est fantastique : c'est à la fois une véritable plongée dans le film, dans le célèbre quartier new-yorkais où il a été tourné, et aussi dans les premières années de la carrière de Rogosin. Le premier disque, en plus du film, contient plusieurs compléments permettant une connaissance plus large du milieu et de la genèse du film ; le second inclut d'autres exemples du travail de Rogosin au début de sa carrière, notamment *Out* (1957) et *Wonderful Times* (1964) ainsi qu'un « making of » de ce dernier.

es

*On the Bowery* (1956) de Lionel Rogosin, se ganó un merecido reconocimiento de numerosos públicos. Recibió importantes premios, incluyendo una nominación para los Oscars y se convirtió hoy en uno de los clásicos del cine documental. Milestone Films acaba de lanzar un extraordinario álbum de DVD de dos discos conteniendo *On the Bowery* y numerosos extras. Se trata de una experiencia de inmersión total en la película, en el entorno de la famosa calle y los barrios de Nueva York, y en los comienzos de la carrera de Rogosin. El CD#1 presenta la película junto con varios extras destinados a ilustrar el entorno geográfico y el proceso de filmación. El CD#2 contiene ejemplos adicionales de la obra temprana de Rogosin, y en particular *Out* (1957) y *Good Times, Wonderful Times* (1964), así como un "making of" de esta última cinta.

# The O’Kalem Collection: 1910-1915

## Kevin Rockett

Professor, Trinity College Dublin. Irish film historian and scholar;  
Chairman of the Irish Film Institute, 1984-1991

During the summers of 1910-12, producer-director Sidney Olcott and screenwriter and actress Gene Gauntier, in what was then the most extensive foray abroad by an American fiction film production company, led a team of Kalem Company personnel to Ireland.<sup>1</sup> The importance of their time in Ireland cannot be overstated, as Ireland, notwithstanding the visits by French, British, and American actuality/“documentary” filmmakers, the activities of local film exhibitor-producers, and the growing popularity of the media, had no sustained film production until the arrival of Kalem. Consequently, the surviving eight films collected on this DVD represent the first significant series of fiction films to be made in Ireland.

During their first short visit of June 1910, Olcott, Gauntier, and cameraman George Hollister made two films: the lost travelogue *The Irish Honeymoon*, with Gauntier and Olcott as bride and groom, released to coincide with St. Patrick’s week, 1911; and the one-reel *The Lad from Old Ireland*, in which Irish peasant Terry (Olcott) leaves rural Ireland and his sweetheart Aileen (Gauntier) to go to New York, where he becomes successful, but turns his back on city life and a new romance to return home in time to save Aileen from eviction. Released in New York on 23 November 1910, it was hugely popular, and not only set down a narrative template that continues to be used – of a poor migrant who, after flourishing in the New World, returns home to spread his riches – but also encouraged Kalem to send a larger crew and cast to Ireland the following summer.

Based in the Co. Kerry village of Beaufort, six miles from Killarney, in 18 weeks the “O’Kalem” unit made 17 films, though, sadly, only the first two they made survive, *Rory O’More* and *The Colleen Bawn*, both of which are included in this DVD collection. *Rory O’More*, released three months after its completion, represents the first in a cycle of films set during the 1798-1803 insurrectionary period in Ireland, while *The Colleen Bawn* is a 3-reel version of Dion Boucicault’s most famous play (1860), a staple of 19<sup>th</sup>-century melodrama. The two surviving films from 1912 are ‘*You Remember Ellen*’, a cross-class love story, and *His Mother*, another migration narrative.

After Olcott and Gauntier left Kalem in autumn 1912, in December 1912 (not December 1913 as stated in the documentary), Gauntier formed her own production company, the Gene Gauntier Feature Players. Affectionately known as the GGs or O’Gees, the company visited Ireland in summer 1913, and made two films, both of which survive: *For Ireland’s Sake* (US release 12 January 1914), a 3-reel version of the rebel narrative *Rory O’More*, and *Come Back to Erin* (US release March/April 1914), another migration story. Though the Gauntier-Olcott partnership had dissolved, Olcott returned to Ireland in summer 1914, and under his own production banner, Sidney Olcott International Features (Sidfilms), made three films, of which only one exists, in an incomplete version: *Bold Emmet, Ireland’s Martyr*. Included on the DVD, the film is a love story set against the background of Robert Emmet’s doomed 1803 rebellion. While it was released in America in August 1915, it seems not to have been released in Ireland, though the DVD’s documentary asserts it was banned there, a claim that might have resulted from confusion with Walter MacNamara’s *Ireland a Nation* (US release 22 September 1914), the exteriors for which were shot in Ireland in summer 1914, and which was banned by the military authorities in 1917, as it generated strong nationalist re-

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1. In 1912 they also went to Egypt and Palestine, where they made the first major film version of the life of Christ, *From the Manger to the Cross*.





The *Colleen Bawn* (1911): Colette Brettel (Eily O'Connor) and Henry Victor (Hardress Cregan)

sponses at a time when Britain was treating representations of Ireland's insurrectionary past with extreme caution.<sup>2</sup>

Taking its title from Gene Gauntier's 1928 manuscript (deposited at MoMA, New York) about her work with Kalem and articles published during 1927-28 in *Woman's Home Companion*, the documentary *Blazing the Trail*, researched, written, and produced by Peter Flynn and Tony Tracy, which accompanies the eight Kalem-Gauntier-Sidfilms dramas (collectively, if somewhat misleadingly, all called "O'Kalems"), describes the filmmakers' various visits to Ireland, and elsewhere. The documentary also contains interviews, of varying quality, with figures who have written on these films and on their broader film, political, and cultural contexts, including, among others, Kalem Company historian Herbert

Reynolds; early Irish film historian Denis Condon; cultural critic Luke Gibbons; film historian Kevin Brownlow; and myself.

Following other commentators, the documentary states that Olcott suffered interference from British authorities with regard to the Irish historical films. According to Lewis Jacobs, whose 1939 book *The Rise of the American Film* was the first to include an account of Kalem in Ireland, the "controversial political material" of the Irish historical films "provoked much disturbance in the home office", such that "Kalem wanted to recall Olcott. Promising to keep clear of explosive subject-matter, Olcott remained in Ireland and turned to the plays of Dion Boucicault, American [sic] playwright of the Irish people." (Jacobs, p.123) Though Jacobs did not support this statement with any primary or contemporary reference, ever since, in part because "home office" has been recast as the British Home Office, rather than company headquarters, it has been used to support the idea of wide-ranging interference by British authorities. Not only is such a view reinforced by the documentary's narration,

2. This controversy is outlined by Kevin Rockett, in Rockett, Luke Gibbons, and John Hill, *Cinema and Ireland*, London: Croom Helm, 1987, pp. 12-16. The film, which was released in Dublin in January 1917, nine months after the 1916 Rising, can be viewed on the website <[www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>.



but also by screenwriter and film historian Louisa Burns-Bisogno, who reasserts this in the course of her interview, as does Thomas Finn. However, evidence of Kalem's satisfaction with these films is reflected in two key facts: firstly, the scenarios for *Rory O'More* and other films were written before the group left New York, and thus were probably supervised by Kalem's Frank Marion, the prime instigator behind the Irish visits; and secondly, they were released in America within a very short time. (*Rory O'More* was released within three months, but was also reissued three years later.) Nevertheless, the notion of British interference, albeit based on misinterpretations of events that occurred after Kalem's visits, confirms the power of Irish nationalism and the memory of resistance to colonialism.

While there remains an ongoing historical/archaeological project to uncover facts concerning Olcott's four Irish visits, this DVD is to be welcomed, not only as it brings together

the most important films made in Ireland during this period (most of which, incidentally, are also available on the website <[www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>, discussed in a separate article in this issue), but also for the accompanying 2011 documentary, *Blazing the Trail*. Though made for a pittance in comparison with most such films, *Blazing the Trail* is a stylish and engaging film that will serve as a valuable resource for those interested in film history as well as in Ireland more generally.

#### THE O'KALEM COLLECTION: 1910-1915

Irish Film Institute & BIFF Productions, 2011.

2-DVD set, NTSC, all regions. Contains 8 surviving

Kalem-Gauntier-Sidfilms Irish-themed film titles

– *The Lad from Old Ireland* (1910, 2 versions),

*Rory O'More* (1911), *The Colleen Bawn* (1911),

'*You Remember Ellen*' (1912), *His Mother* (1912, 2 versions),

*For Ireland's Sake* (1914), *Come Back to Erin* (1914),

and *Bold Emmet, Ireland's Martyr* (1915) –

plus the feature-length documentary *Blazing the Trail*:

*The O'Kalems in Ireland* (2011, directed by Peter Flynn

and produced by Tony Tracy). DVD bonus: O'Kalem

image gallery. With 20-page booklet, in English.

fr

Ce coffret de deux disques regroupe des films tournés en Irlande, principalement par Sidney Olcott et Gene Gauntier pour la Kalem Company entre 1910 et 1912, pour Gene Gauntier Feature Players en 1913, et pour Sidfilms, la société de Olcott, en 1914. Le documentaire de Peter Flynn *Blazing the Trail* (2011), qui accompagne les films, décrit le travail des cinéastes en Irlande et son contexte à partir d'entrevues avec des spécialistes du cinéma des premiers temps. La vingtaine de films produits par Olcott et Gauntier représentent la première incursion dans le cinéma de fiction en Irlande, à une époque où aucun film de fiction n'avait encore été tourné dans le pays. On peut citer, entre autres, *The Lad from Old Ireland* (1910), une histoire d'immigration, et *Rory O'More* (1911), un drame historique qui aborde un thème populaire avec Olcott et d'autres cinéastes de l'époque. Le commentaire du documentaire d'accompagnement et les propos de certains des experts qui y sont interviewés laissent entendre que les autorités britanniques ont essayé d'entraver la production des films historiques de la Kalem; aucun document n'a pourtant été trouvé qui puisse accréditer cette thèse. Néanmoins ce coffret est plus que bienvenu en ce qu'il rassemble les films les plus importants tournés en Irlande à cette époque – la plupart de ces films sont également accessibles sur le site Web <[www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>. Quant à *Blazing the Trail*, à l'évidence produit avec un budget dérisoire, c'est un film élégant et attachant qui va assurément être un outil très utile pour quiconque s'intéresse à l'histoire du cinéma aussi bien qu'à l'Irlande de façon générale.

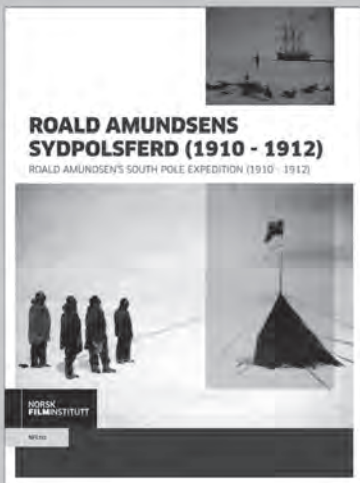
es

La colección O'Kalem: 1910-1915 (The O'Kalem Collection: 1910-1915) es un DVD de dos discos que reúnen películas producidas en Irlanda principalmente por Sidney Olcott y Gene Gauntier para la Kalem Company (1910-12) y la productora Gene Gauntier Feature Players (1913); así como las películas Sidfilms de Olcott producidas en 1914. El suplemento documental, *Blazing the Trail* (2011, dirigido por Peter Flynn y producido por Tony Tracy), destaca las actividades de directores en Irlanda, contextualizados mediante entrevistas con investigadores del cine de los primeros tiempos. Antes del auge de la producción de películas irlandesas, Olcott y Gauntier abren el camino produciendo más de 20 películas de ficción sobre temas irlandeses, comenzando con una epopeya narrativa sobre la migración, *The Lad from Old Ireland* (1910), y lanzando un drama histórico *Rory O'More* (1911), tema preferido de Olcott y otros directores. Según el comentarista del suplemento documental y algunos de los entrevistados, las autoridades Británicas habrían tratado de obstaculizar la realización de las películas de inspiración histórica de Kalem, aunque esto no haya podido ser corroborado. En definitiva, podemos darnos por satisfechos con la producción de este DVD, ya que reúne las películas más importantes realizadas en Irlanda en ese período (y que se encuentran en el sitio Web <[www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm](http://www.tcd.ie/Irishfilm)>). Producida con medios irrisorios en comparación con otras películas del género, *Blazing the Trail* sigue siendo atractiva por su forma y su estilo, y de valor documental por la fuente de información que representa para quienes se interesan por la historia del cine y, de manera más general, por la historia de Irlanda.

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Edited by Eileen Bowser. FIAF 1988, 121p, 24€

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Manuel de base sur le fonctionnement d'une archive de films. Edité par Eileen Bowser et John Kuiper. / Basic manual on the functioning of a film archive.

Edited by Eileen Bowser and John Kuiper. FIAF 1980, 151p., illus., 30€ (either French or English version)

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FIAF yearbook published for the 50th anniversary, containing descriptions of its 78 members and observers and a historical account of its development. / Annuaire de la FIAF publié pour son 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, contenant une description de ses 78 membres et observateurs et un compte rendu historique de son développement. FIAF 1988, 203p., illus., 27€

#### Rediscovering the Role of Film Archives: to Preserve and to Show

Proceedings of the FIAF Symposium held in Lisboa, 1989. FIAF 1990, 143p., 30€

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### CATALOGUING – DOCUMENTATION

#### The LUMIERE Project: The European Film Archives at the Crossroads

Documents the restoration projects and initiatives of the LUMIERE Project (1991–1995), celebrating the first major pan-European film archive collaborations. With dossiers on over 100 projects, lists of films discovered by the Search for Lost Films, and numerous color frame enlargements. Edited by Catherine A. Surowiec. The LUMIERE Project, Lisbon, 1996; English, 264 p. 50€

#### Glossary of Filmographic Terms

This new version includes terms and indexes in English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Swedish, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Czech, Hungarian, Bulgarian. Compiled by Jon Gartenberg. FIAF 1989, 149p., 45€

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#### FIAF Classification Scheme for Literature on Film and Television

by Michael Moulds. 2nd ed. revised and enlarged, ed. by Karen Jones and Michael Moulds. FIAF 1992, 50€

#### Bibliography of National Filmographies

Annotated list of filmographies, journals and other publications. Compiled by D. Gebauer. Edited by H. W. Harrison. FIAF 1985, 80p., 25€

#### Règles de catalogage des archives de films

Version française de "The FIAF Cataloguing Rules of Film Archives" traduite de l'anglais par Éric Loné, AFNOR 1994, 280 p., ISBN 2-12-484312-5, 25€

#### Reglas de catalogación de la FIAF para archivos

Traducción española de "The FIAF Cataloguing Rules of Film Archives" por Jorge Arellano Trejo. Filmoteca de la UNAM y Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 25€

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ISBN 2-9600296-1-5

**Manual for Access to the Collections**

Special issue of the *Journal of Film Preservation*, # 55, Dec. 1997: 15€

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FIAF 1995, ISBN 972-619-059-2; 30€

## OTHER PUBLISHERS

**Newsreels in Film Archives**

Based on the proceedings of FIAF's 'Newsreels Symposium' held in Mo-i-Rana, Norway, in 1993, this book contains more than 30 papers on newsreel history, and on the problems and experiences of contributing archives in preserving, cataloguing and providing access to new film collections.

Edited by Roger Smither and Wolfgang Klauke. ISBN 0-948911-13-1 (UK), ISBN 0-8386-3696-9 (USA), 224p., illus., 49€

**A Handbook for Film Archives**

Basic manual on the functioning of a film archive.

Edited by Eileen Bowser and John Kuiper, New York, 1991, 200p., 29,50 €, ISBN 0-8240-3533-X.

**Archiving the Audiovisual Heritage: a Joint Technical Symposium**

Proceedings of the 1987 Technical Symposium held in West Berlin, organised by FIAF, FIAT, & IASA. 30 papers covering the most recent developments in the preservation and conservation of film, video, and sound, Berlin, 1987, 169p., 23€. Available from Deutsches Filmmuseum, Schaumaikainkai, 41, D-60596 Frankfurt A.M., Germany

**Archiving the Audiovisual Heritage:****Third Joint Technical Symposium**

Proceedings of the 1990 Technical Symposium held in Ottawa, organised by FIAF, FIAT, & IASA, Ottawa, 1992, 192p., 40 US\$. Available from George Boston, 14 Dulverton Drive, Furtzon, Milton Keynes MK4 1DE, United Kingdom, e-mail: [keynes2@aol.com](mailto:keynes2@aol.com)

**Image and Sound Archiving and Access: the Challenge of the Third Millennium: 5th Joint Technical Symposium**

Proceedings of the 2000 JTS held in Paris, organised by CNC and CST, CD-ROM 17,70€, book 35,40€, book & CD-ROM 53,10€, available from JTS Paris 2000, c/o Archives du Film du CNC, 7bis rue A. Turpault, 78390 Bois d'Arcy, France, [jts2000@cst.fr](mailto:jts2000@cst.fr)

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