



THE THREE COLOURS TRILOGY

Three Colours: Red (Trois couleurs: Rouge)

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Director: Krzysztof Kieślowski

©/Production Companies: MK2 Productions,
France 3 Cinéma, CAB Productions,
Zespol Filmowy 'Tor'

With the participation of: Canal+

Supported by: Eurimages Conseil de l'Europe

In co-production with: Télévision Suisse Romande

With the support of: L'Office Fédéral de la Culture

Suisse du Département Fédéral de l'Intérieur

Executive Producer: Yvon Crenn

Presented by: Marın Karmitz

Unit Managers/Administration: Heinz Dill,

François Cesalli, Xavier Grin, Blez Gabioud,

Olivier Zimmermann, Christian Manzoni,

Nathalie Jaquinet, Gisèle Vuillaume,

Christine Hulin, Héléne Platel, Aline Corneille,

Florence Ruffetta, Dominique Lefevre

Production Manager: Gérard Ruey

1st Assistant Director: Emmanuel Finkiel

2nd Assistant Directors: Thierry Mouquin,

Pascal Verdosci, Xavier Nicol,

Jean-Jacques Rossmann

Assistant to the Director: Stan Latek

Script Supervisor: Geneviève Dufour

CASTING: Margot Capelier

Screenplay: Krzysztof Piesiewicz,

Krzysztof Kieślowski

Screenplay Consultants: Agnieszka Holland,

Edward Zebrowski, Piotr Sobocinski

Dialogue Translations: Marcin Latalo, Roman Gren

Director of Photography: Piotr Sobocinski

Lighting: Hans Meier, Salvatore Piazzitta,

Blaise Bauquis, Eric André, Alain Dubouloz

Steadicam Operator: Ricardo Brunner

Technocrane Operators: Martin C. Hume,

Henryk Jedynak

Assistant Operator: Muriel Coulin

Second Camera: Piotr Jaxa

Groupist: Alain Dubouloz

Grips: Albert Vasseur, Alain Dreze, Bernard Weber

Stills: Piotr Jaxa

Editor: Jacques Witte

Assistant Editors: Aïlo Auguste, Catherine Cormon,

Salvatore Di Meo, Sandrine Normand, Bettina

Hoffmann, Urszula Lesiak, Michele D'Attoma

Art Director: Claude Lenoir

Costume Creations: Corinne Jory

Costumes: Nadia Cuenoud, Véronique Michel

Fashion Consultant: Christine Noussan

Make-up/Hairdressers: Nathalie Tanner,

Catherine Zingg

Titles/Opticals: Ercidan

Music: Zbigniew Preisner, Bertrand Lenclos

Preisner Music Performed by: Warsaw Sinfonia,

Philharmonic Choir of Silesie

Guitars: Janusz Strobel, Jerzy Klocek

Budeny Mayer Music Performed by:

Orchestre Symphonique de Katowice

Soprano: Elzbieta Towarnicka

Conductor (Warsaw Sinfonia):

Wojciech Michniewski

Choir Master: Jan Wojtacha

Conductor (Orchestre Symphonique de Katowice):

Zdzislaw Szostak

Choreography: Brigitte Matteuzzi

Sound Recordists: Brigitte Taillandier,

Sandrine Henchoz

Sound: Jean-Claude Laureux

Sound Mixer: William Flageollet

Sound Editors: Piotr Zawadzki,

Red closes the *Three Colours* trilogy – and Kieślowski's career as a director – on a magisterial note of wish-fulfilment. Each of the film's four main characters is a distinct centre of interest with her or his own narrative orbit; and these orbits intersect only occasionally and sometimes in surprising ways. But one of them, the retired judge played by Jean-Louis Trintignant, sees himself as a silent and embittered god. Emotionally wounded by a faithless lover and morally shaken by episodes in his courtroom, he has retreated from society to live alone and eavesdrop on his neighbours' phone conversations, exultantly monitoring the messes they, too, are making of their lives.

His stance is changed by the accidental arrival in his life of the young model Valentine (Irène Jacob): he moves from passive observation to intervention. He is too old to romance her himself, and so (thanks to a mystical transference that could only have come from the director of *The Double Life of Veronique*) he lines her up with a younger surrogate of himself, a young man he has never met but who is busy reliving the judge's own youthful experiences. In other words, the judge starts playing god in an active sense, manipulating lives and relationships. Kieślowski knows as well as you or I that this is also what a film director does. The closing scene of *Red* amounts to a brilliant synthesis of the judge's handiwork and the director's vision. And since it's a scene that involves the protagonists of *Blue* and *White*, it also brings the entire trilogy to a tremulous but emotionally satisfying conclusion. Not bad for a filmmaker who says he has trouble with endings.

Liberty, equality and fraternity may well have been the starting points for Kieślowski and Piesiewicz's thinking about *Three Colours*, but this is finally a trilogy about love in the 90s. It's not giving much away to say that all three films quicken in pace as they move towards climaxes in which the characters discover in themselves an unsuspected capacity for reciprocating intense feelings. In all three cases, this involves putting behind them earlier relationships that they believed at the time to be happy and fulfilling. For Julie in *Blue*, it means accepting that her idyllic marriage was a sham, acknowledging her own role in co-writing her late husband's music and opening herself to the sincere affections of Olivier. For Karol and Dominique in *White*, it means outgrowing the whirlwind excitement of their hasty marriage – seen in ironic, slow-motion flashbacks – and realising that their attempts to destroy each other were actually declarations of love. And for Valentine in *Red*, it means splitting from her jealous, absent boyfriend and embracing the possibilities revealed to her by the judge. Of the three, Valentine's future seems the least secure, since circumstances have only just thrown her together with Auguste, the young man who is perhaps the judge's younger self. But everything is in place to push her into the new relationship: the judge's design, Kieślowski's story structure, and the audience's will.

The trilogy is also, of course, about colour: about blue as the colour of remembering and melancholy, about white as the colour of weddings and orgasms, about red as the colour of jeeps and emergency rescue services. That's a jokey way of saying that Kieślowski integrates his colour motifs into the social and psychological fabric of his storylines, making connections and

Jean-Claude Laureux, Francine Lemaître,
Nicolas Naegelen

Sound Effects: Jean-Pierre Lelong,
Mario Melchiori, Vincent Arnardi
Animal Trainer: André Noël

Cast:

Irène Jacob (*Valentine Dussaut*)

Jean-Louis Trintignant (*Judge Joseph Kern*)

Frédérique Feder (*Karin*)

Jean-Pierre Lorit (*Auguste Bruner*)

Samuel Le Bihan (*photographer*)

Marion Stalens (*veterinary surgeon*)

Teco Celio (*barman*)

Bernard Escalon (*record dealer*)

Jean Schlegel (*neighbour*)

Elzbieta Jasinska (*woman*)

Paul Vermeulen (*Karin's friend*)

Jean-Marie Daunas (*theatre manager*)

Roland Carey (*drug dealer*)

Brigitte Paul

Cécile Tanner

Leo Ramseyer

Anne Theurillat

Nader Farman

Neige Dolski

Jessica Korinek

Marc Autheman (*voice*)

Juliette Binoche (*Julie*)

Julie Delpy (*Dominique Vidal*)

Benoît Régent (*Olivier*)

Zbigniew Zamachowski (*Karol Karol*)

France-Switzerland-Poland 1994©

100 mins

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finessing moods. This relates to other visual strategies in the trilogy: the recurring play of light on Julie's face in *Blue*, the four fades to black at moments when time stands still in *Blue*, the cuts from light to darkness in *White*, the disquieting tracking shots (disquieting because not tied to anybody's point of view, even when they initially seem to be) in *Red*. These and Kieślowski's other formal strategies are hardly avant-garde, and audiences (if not critics) clearly have no trouble reading them, but they are arresting enough to give the trilogy a creative energy missing from most other mainstream filmmaking these days.

Two years ago, introducing an Edward Yang retrospective in a film festival catalogue, I wrote: 'Imagine a kind of filmmaking that's truly in tune with the ways you think and relate to other people. A deeply humane kind of filmmaking, but free from "humanist" lies and sentimental evasions. Not a dry, "realistic" kind of filmmaking, but one in which all the imaginative and creative efforts have gone into understanding the way we are. A kind of filmmaking as sensitive to silence as to speech, and alert to the kind of meanings we prefer to hide away. To my knowledge, only two directors in the world are currently making films like that. One is Krzysztof Kieślowski in Poland. The other is Edward Yang in Taiwan.'

When I wrote that, I had no idea that Kieślowski was interested in Yang's work (he is), or that the *Three Colours* trilogy would move into and take over the territory mapped out by Yang in *The Terrorizers* – that inexplicable terrain where the aleatory becomes objective chance and lives intersect as if fulfilling some higher design. Neither director is at all religious in the orthodox sense, but Kieślowski is no doubt the more 'spiritual' of the two: the more willing to privilege moments of sixth-sense intuition and the more receptive to ideas such as the existence of the soul and parallel lives. But both men are perfectly in tune with the patterns, issues, tics and tropes, of modern life, and Kieślowski's ultimate achievement in *Three Colours* is to have pinpointed the mood of Europe in the 90s.

Tony Rayns, *Sight and Sound*, June 1994